



UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA

**Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de la Educación**

**Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés como  
Lengua Extranjera**

The Effects of Project-Based Tasks on International Baccalaureate Diploma  
Programme Students' Writing Skills

Trabajo de titulación previo a la obtención  
del Título de Magíster en Lingüística  
Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés como  
Lengua Extranjera

**Autora:**

Tania Karina Segarra Matute

C.I.: 0103823688

Correo electrónico: kasm\_10@yahoo.com

**Directora:**

Rosita Monserrath Torres Ortiz, Mst.

C.I.: 0102180593

Cuenca – Ecuador

25 de Agosto de 2020



## Resumen

Este estudio de caso tiene como objetivo investigar la efectividad de las tareas basadas en proyectos enfocadas hacia el desarrollo de las habilidades de escritura de los estudiantes del Programa del Diploma del Bachillerato Internacional (IBDP). Los participantes fueron 9 estudiantes de la Unidad Educativa Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón que cursaban el segundo año del IBDP. El diseño de este estudio combina lo cuantitativo y cualitativo. La fase cuantitativa consistía en un examen antes y después de las 32 horas de intervención, y los resultados fueron examinados utilizando el análisis estadístico descriptivo, donde se analizó las medidas de tendencia central y de frecuencias relativas. Además, se hizo un análisis estadístico inferencial a través de la prueba de hipótesis de Wilcoxon. La fase cualitativa consistía en un diario del profesor escrito durante la intervención y una entrevista a los estudiantes al final de la misma para analizar sus percepciones hacia la escritura. Los resultados se examinaron empleando el análisis estadístico descriptivo de frecuencias relativas. Los resultados del estudio indican que los estudiantes mejoraron la escritura después de la implementación de tareas basadas en proyectos. Además, los estudiantes presentaron una actitud positiva hacia la escritura, donde el trabajo colaborativo fue un elemento clave para su desarrollo. Se concluye que las tareas basadas en proyectos podrían ser adoptadas en las clases de inglés ab initio orientadas al desarrollo de la escritura como un enfoque que hace que los estudiantes se sientan más motivados, cómodos y seguros al escribir.

**Palabras claves:** Tareas Basadas en Proyectos. Programa del Diploma del Bachillerato Internacional. Destreza de Escritura. Percepciones. Trabajo Colaborativo.



## Abstract

This exploratory case study aims at investigating the effectiveness of Project-Based Tasks on International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) Students' Writing Skills. The participants were 9 second-year IBDP students at Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School. The students were part of a 32-hour treatment where project-based tasks were incorporated in their English ab Initio classes. A mixed methods research design was used for data collection. In order to collect quantitative data, IBDP a pre-test and a post-test were administered to analyze the students' writing skills before and after the intervention, and a Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was employed to examine the effect of project-based tasks on students' writing skills. The qualitative data were collected with the purpose of obtaining information about the students' perceptions toward writing as a result of the implementation of Project-Based Tasks. Thus, a teacher's journal was kept during the whole phase of intervention, while interviews with students were conducted at the end of it. These instruments were employed to triangulate what the researcher perceived during the intervention and how students felt about writing after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks. Results from the study indicate that students presented improvement in their writing skills after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks. Additionally, the students presented a positive attitude toward writing, where collaborative work was a key element for writing improvement. In light to the findings, Project-Based Tasks should be adopted in English ab Initio classes since they not only help learners improve their writing skills, but also their motivation toward it.

**Key words:** Project-Based Tasks. International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. Writing Skill. Perceptions. Collaborative Work.



## Table of Contents

Resumen.....	2
Abstract.....	3
Table of Contents.....	4
Cláusula de licencia y autorización para publicación en el Repositorio Institucional.....	8
Cláusula de Propiedad Intelectual.....	9
Dedication.....	10
Acknowledgements.....	11
Introduction.....	12
Chapter 1.....	15
Research Description.....	15
1.1. Background and Justification.....	15
1.2. Statement of the Problem.....	16
1.3. Research Questions.....	17
1.4. Objectives.....	17
1.4.1. General objective.....	17
1.4.2. Specific objectives.....	18
1.5. Context.....	18
Chapter 2.....	20
Theoretical Framework.....	20
2.1. Writing and the Writing Process.....	20
2.1.1. What is Writing?.....	20
2.1.2. The Writing Process.....	21
2.1.2.1. <i>The product approach to writing.</i> .....	21
2.1.2.2. <i>The process approach to writing.</i> .....	23
2.2. How to Teach Writing in English as a Foreign Language.....	25
2.3. Teaching EFL Writing in English ab Initio Classes.....	26
2.3.1. Written production assessment in English ab initio classes.....	29
2.4. Project-Based Tasks.....	31
2.4.1. Historical background of project-based tasks.....	31
2.4.2. Definition of project-based tasks.....	33
2.4.3. Characteristics of Project-Based Tasks.....	34
2.4.4. Benefits of Project-Based Tasks in EFL classrooms.....	35
2.4.5. Challenges of Project-Based Tasks in EFL classrooms.....	36
2.4.6. Process of implementation of Project-Based Tasks in EFL classrooms.....	37
Chapter 3.....	41



Literature Review.....	41
3.1. Project-Based Tasks in EFL Classrooms.....	41
3.2. Project-Based Tasks and the Development of EFL Written Production .....	47
Chapter 4.....	63
Methodology .....	63
4.1. Research Context.....	63
4.2. Participants .....	64
4.3. Parents' and Students' Consent .....	64
4.4. Consent from the School .....	65
4.5. Research Design .....	65
4.6. Procedure .....	65
4.7. Intervention.....	66
4.7.1. Project-Based Tasks implementation. ....	66
4.8. Data Collection Instruments .....	73
4.8.1. Quantitative data collection instrument.....	73
4.8.2. Qualitative data collection instruments. ....	75
4.8.2.1. <i>Journal</i> . ....	75
4.8.2.2. <i>Interviews</i> . ....	75
Chapter 5.....	78
Results.....	78
5.1. Quantitative Data Analysis .....	79
5.1.1. Pre-test and post-test results.....	80
5.1.2. Pre-test and post-test comparison.....	85
5.1.2.1. <i>Rank analysis</i> .....	89
5.2. Qualitative Data Analysis .....	92
5.2.1. <i>Journal</i> . ....	93
5.2.1.1. <i>Speculation</i> . ....	93
5.2.1.2. <i>Design of the project activities</i> . ....	93
5.2.1.3. <i>Project execution</i> . ....	94
5.2.1.4. <i>Evaluation</i> . ....	95
5.2.2. <i>Interviews</i> . ....	96
5.3. Quantitative and Qualitative Results Comparison.....	104
Chapter 6.....	106
Discussion .....	106
Chapter 7.....	115
Conclusions and Recommendations .....	115
References.....	121



Appendices.....	127
-----------------	-----

### List of Tables

Table 1: Prescribed Themes and Topics for English ab Initio .....	29
Table 2: Text Types in Sections A and B for Productive External Assessments .....	30
Table 3: Argumentative Essay Outline (Zemach & Stafford, 2008, p. 102) .....	69
Table 4: Overall Pre-Test Results .....	81
Table 5: Pre-Test and Post-Test Written Language Task Fulfillment Criterion Results .....	83
Table 6: Pre-Test and Post-Test Overall Score Analysis .....	84
Table 7: Pre-test and Post-test Message Criterion Results .....	85
Table 8: Pre-Test and Post-Test Language Criterion Results .....	86
Table 9: Pre-Test and Post-Test Format Criterion Results .....	88
Table 10: Pre-test and Post-test Rank Analysis .....	89
Table 11: Pre-Test and Post-Test Overall Score Analysis .....	89
Table 12: Rank Analysis .....	90
Table 13: Comparative Analysis through the Wilcoxon Test.....	91

### List of Figures

Figure 1: Argumentative essay structure (Zemach & Stafford, 2008, p. 102).....	69
Figure 2: Types of hooks (Zemach & Stafford, 2008, p. 29).....	70
Figure 3: Language for introducing counterarguments and arguments .....	71
Figure 4: Pre-test and post-test written message task fulfillment criterion results .....	82
Figure 5: Pre-test and post-test writing format results.....	83
Figure 6: Difference between the pre-test and the post-test based on the message criterion ..	86
Figure 7: Difference between the pre-test and post-test based on the language criterion .....	87
Figure 8: Difference between the pre-test and post-test in format criterion .....	88
Figure 9: Students' preferences .....	97
Figure 10: Opinions about Project-Based Tasks.....	98
Figure 11: Perceptions on language skills improvement .....	100



## List of Appendices

Appendix A. Parents' and Students' Informed Consent Form .....	127
Appendix B. Request for Authorization for the Application of the Research .....	129
Appendix C. School Consent Form .....	130
Appendix D. Project Planner .....	131
Appendix E. PBL Lesson Plans .....	135
Appendix F. Peer Feedback Form .....	138
Appendix G. Pre-test and Post-test .....	139
Appendix H. IBDP External Assessment Criteria for Productive Skills-Section B .....	140
Appendix I. Teacher's Journal Template .....	143
Appendix J. Interview Guide Template .....	144



## Cláusula de licencia y autorización para publicación en el Repositorio Institucional

Tania Karina Segarra Matute en calidad de autora y titular de los derechos morales y patrimoniales del trabajo de titulación "The Effects of Project-Based Tasks on International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Students' Writing Skills", de conformidad con el Art. 114 del CÓDIGO ORGÁNICO DE LA ECONOMÍA SOCIAL DE LOS CONOCIMIENTOS, CREATIVIDAD E INNOVACIÓN reconozco a favor de la Universidad de Cuenca una licencia gratuita, intransferible y no exclusiva para el uso no comercial de la obra, con fines estrictamente académicos.

Asimismo, autorizo a la Universidad de Cuenca para que realice la publicación de este trabajo de titulación en el repositorio institucional, de conformidad a lo dispuesto en el Art. 144 de la Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior.

Cuenca, 25 de agosto de 2020



Tania Karina Segarra Matute

C.I: 0103823688





### Cláusula de Propiedad Intelectual

Tania Karina Segarra Matute, autora del trabajo de titulación “The Effects of Project-Based Tasks on International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Students’ Writing Skills”, certifico que todas las ideas, opiniones y contenidos expuestos en la presente investigación son de exclusiva responsabilidad de su autora.

Cuenca, 25 de agosto de 2020



Tania Karina Segarra Matute

C.I: 0103823688



## **Dedication**

This research study is dedicated to the three most important people in my life. First, to my mom, who has always believed in me and has taught me the importance of education and hard work. To my husband, Alberto, who has always been there, showing me support and love to face the challenges during this thesis development. Last, but not least, to my son, Jesus, who is a miracle and an inspiration in my life.



## Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank God for giving me the strength and the wisdom I needed to accomplish one of the most important goals in life.

I would also like to acknowledge my thesis advisor, Mst. Rosita Torres Ortíz, who has supported me in the development of this work. Thanks for your time, your patience, and the commitment you showed during this arduous journey. There is no doubt that without your expert guidance, I could not have concluded my thesis.

In addition, I would like to thank all my family, specially my mom, who encouraged me to apply for the Master's Program. I also want to thank my husband and my son, who were with me in the good and in the bad times during this journey.

I would also like to thank the director and the coordinator of the Master's Program, Mst. Verónica León and Mst. Gabriela Tobar. Thanks for your dedication and for being there when I had a lot of questions about this project, and I received your support immediately.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge all the professors from the Master's Program for sharing their valuable knowledge with all of us.



## Introduction

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) is a two-year pre-university course designed for students aged 16 to 19. It has been implemented in Ecuador since 1981 in private schools, and in 2006 in public schools with the purpose of improving education (Barnett et al., 2013).

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme was implemented in Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School in 2015. Since then, the subject English ab Initio started to be taught in the school as a language acquisition course. The purpose of this subject is to develop the receptive as well as the productive skills required to communicate effectively in English speaking countries (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011).

From the four language skills, writing has been the skill the students had struggled the most because they are expected to write different text types such as letters, essays, speeches, reviews, among others, as part of their final evaluation. This lack of writing ability has led to demotivation and anxiety to the writing tasks.

It is important to keep in mind that the literature suggests that EFL students find English writing as the most difficult language skill to acquire because it encompasses a complex process (Ahangari & Behzady, 2012). Furthermore, Tessema (2005) acknowledges demotivation and anxiety as feelings students could have toward writing due to the different elements they need to take into account when writing.

Additionally, Project-Based Tasks have proven to be an effective approach to improve students' writing skills as well as their motivation to write (Sadeghi, Biniaz, & Soleimani, 2016). It is important to mention that Project-Based Tasks are defined as a set of learning activities that are structured around projects, in which students work together, participate in



discussions, and conduct research in order to reach a goal that is common for all the people in the group (Putri, Artini, & Nitiasih, 2017).

Thus, the present study addresses the problem students have when writing in English ab Initio classes, and intends to analyze the effects of Project-Based Tasks on written production and perceptions toward writing of students of the second year of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School.

A pre-test and a post-test to compare the students' writing skills before and after the intervention were administered. A teacher's journal and interviews with students were the instruments used to obtain a deeper understanding of the implementation of Project-Based Tasks to improve writing in an English ab Initio class in the Ecuadorian context.

This study is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter presents the research description of the study that includes the background and the justification, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the general and the specific objectives, and the context. This provides the reader with necessary information to understand the scope of this study.

In chapter two, the theoretical framework provides the reader with the main foundations that support the current study. Theoretical foundations about writing and how it is taught in an EFL environment is addressed first, then this chapter offers a clear idea of how writing is assessed in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. Additionally, theoretical foundations of Project-Based Tasks are analyzed as an ideal approach to enhance students' writing skills and their motivation to writing.

Chapter three discusses the review of the literature about Project-Based Tasks on enhancing students' writing skills and their perceptions toward writing in different EFL contexts. In other words, this chapter analyzes and reports some studies and findings about the application of Project-Based Tasks in EFL classes.



In chapter four, the methodology of the investigation is addressed. The research design of the study, the context, the participants, the description of the phase of intervention, and the data collection instruments have been described in this chapter.

Chapter five contains the results of the quantitative and qualitative data, which are discussed in detail. These results are presented by means of charts, graphics, and quotes from students that explain the effects of Project-Based Tasks on students' writing skills and their perceptions toward writing.

In chapter six, the discussion and the limitations of the current study are presented. It primarily establishes a link between the results from the present study and the results of studies carried out in other contexts. Then some issues that have emerged during this research study have been documented as limitations.

Chapter 7 deals with the conclusions drawn from the current study, where the effectiveness of Project-Based Tasks on written production as well as the students' perceptions toward writing will be analyzed. Additionally, some recommendations for future investigations about the effects of Project-Based Tasks on written production will be pointed out.



## Chapter 1

### Research Description

#### 1.1. Background and Justification

The ability to write is one of the language skills assessed by the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). One of the six subjects the Ecuadorian IBDP students learn is “English ab initio.” Among other things, this subject aims to evaluate the use of English in different contexts and for a variety of purposes. In this sense, students are not only expected to use appropriate register, format, and correct structures of the language, but also to have accurate communication and to produce clear and convincing arguments for supporting points of view. In other words, the main objective of this subject is to teach English for communicative purposes (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011).

Being aware of those writing requirements, teachers must be well-prepared in order to help IBDP students become competent writers, who can use English as a tool for communication and capable of producing a variety of texts, which includes essays, articles, blogs, e-mails, interviews, invitations, reviews, poems, menus, messages, and speeches. Besides, IBDP teachers should design the course taking into consideration the students’ interests and needs, making use of approaches and techniques that promote independent and collaborative work (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011).

The problem Ecuadorian IBDP English teachers in public schools face is the lack of training on new methodologies, resulting in problems when they have to create well-organized, imaginative, and interactive lessons that fulfill the IB expectations (Barnet, et al., 2013). Also, based on the researcher’s experience as an IBDP English teacher, it has to be said that there is a necessity of finding approaches and techniques to improve the students’ writing skills since they find them very difficult, which results in a demotivating task.



An approach that has shown great outcomes in terms of increasing content knowledge, language skills, collaboration, learning autonomy, and motivation in learning English is project-based work, since it actively engages students in meaningful activities, resulting in a positive attitude toward learning English (Alan & Stoller, 2005). Project-Based Tasks have been defined as an engaging process that gives the student the opportunity to understand a topic through the integration of language and content, thus stimulating collaborative as well as individual work (Stoller, 2006).

Furthermore, Project-Based Tasks have not only proven to give good outcomes in terms of writing, but also this approach has shown to improve enthusiasm, creativity, self-directed learning, and collaborative work (Putri et al., 2017).

In spite of these findings, studies on the effects of Project-Based Tasks on International Baccalaureate Diploma Program Students' writing skills have not been conducted yet. As a result, the main purpose of this research project is to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of Project-Based Tasks in English ab initio classes in Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School. The researcher will specifically determine if this approach can improve writing skills according to the IB requirements. Besides, she will explore the students' perceptions toward writing after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Writing, which has been defined by Harklau (2002) as a way of communicating and expressing thoughts and feelings through written form, is considered as one of the most difficult skills to acquire because it requires a number of skills and conventions like organization and development of ideas, and the selection of accurate vocabulary and grammatical structures depending on what the learners want to communicate (Ahangari & Behzady, 2012). Besides, due to the fact that learners do not only have to deal with grammar





and vocabulary, but also with content and organization, they start feeling discouraged and anxious (Tessema, 2005).

Keeping in mind the challenges students face when writing, IBDP teachers must help students achieve communicative competence through the exposure to both independent and collaborative learning tasks. Also, they must expose students to the target language in situations away from the classroom (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011).

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effects of Project-Based Work, which is an active and inquiry-based way of learning (Markham, 2011), as an approach that might fulfill the IBDP requirements in terms of writing, while exploring the students' perceptions toward writing.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

- How does the implementation of Project-Based Tasks affect written production in International Baccalaureate Diploma Program Students from Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School?
- What are the IBDP students' perceptions toward their written production in a Project-Based Task context?

### **1.4. Objectives**

#### **1.4.1. General objective.**

To analyze the effects of Project-Based Tasks on written production and perceptions toward writing of students of the second year of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School.



#### **1.4.2. Specific objectives.**

- To determine the IBDP students' written production level before and after the application of Project-Based Tasks through an IBDP test.
- To explore students' perceptions toward writing after the use of Project-Based Tasks in their English classes.
- To compare the quantitative and the qualitative results and analyze their relationship.

#### **1.5. Context**

This study was conducted with a group of 9 International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme students, 7 females and 2 males. They were studying in the second year of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School. They received 5 classes of English instruction a week. Each class lasted 40 minutes. This exploratory case study took place during the 2018-2019 school year, in the months of May and June of 2019.

A mixed methods research design was employed in this study with the purpose of investigating the effects of Project-Based Tasks on the writing skill development. In order to collect quantitative data about the written production performance before and after the intervention, an IBDP pre-test and an IBDP post-test were administered. These instruments, which were argumentative essays, were adapted from External Assessment Paper 2: Productive Skills of the International Baccalaureate Organization (2013). The same IBDP criteria were used to evaluate the pre-test and the post-test. These instruments were not piloted because they followed the standards and criteria used in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

The intervention period lasted 32 hours. It followed the ten steps proposed by Alan and Stoller (2005), where a systematic implementation of Project-Based Tasks was done as an



attempt to improve the students' writing skills. During the implementation of this approach, a teacher's journal was used to record the students' perceptions toward writing. The teacher's journal was adapted from Kemmis (2009).

Finally, the students were interviewed after the intervention with the purpose of obtaining information about their perceptions toward writing after the implementation of project-based tasks. These interviews, which were adapted from Artini, Ratminingsih and Padmadewi (2018), contained a total of 8 open-ended questions. This instrument was piloted in the Third Year of Baccalaureate, Class A of Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School because this class had the same features as the studied group. As a result of piloting, some changes were done so that the questions were clear enough to be answered.

In conclusion, this study let us analyze the effects of Project-Based Tasks on written production and perceptions toward writing of IBDP students at Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School through the exploration and analysis of quantitative as well as qualitative data.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Theoretical Framework**

This chapter focuses on the main theoretical foundations that were used to support this research study and they are as follows: writing and the writing process, how to teach writing in English as a foreign language, teaching EFL writing in English ab initio classes, and project-based tasks. Writing process discusses what students need and what teachers should provide in order to develop this important skill, and Project-Based Tasks discuss the relevance of giving students specific tasks to work on and how this helps the learning process.

#### **2.1. Writing and the Writing Process**

##### **2.1.1. What is Writing?**

Writing is a form of communication that allows students to put their feelings and ideas on paper, to organize their knowledge and beliefs into convincing arguments, and to convey meaning through well-constructed text. In its most advanced form, written expression can be as vivid as a work of art. As children learn the steps of writing, and as they build new skills upon old, writing evolves from the first simple sentences to elaborate stories and essays. Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and organization come together and grow together to help the student demonstrate more advanced writing skills each year. (Aupperlee, Geraghty, & Lien, n.d., p. 1)

Writing in EFL contexts is defined as a process with clear objectives that requires learners' awareness of the composing procedure it follows. When writing, both teacher's interaction as well as peer to peer interaction play an important role (Jensen, Flood, & Squire, 1991).



According to Susser (1994), EFL writing is defined as a communicative act that is socially situated. In other words, writing is a form of communication that involves the writer's and the reader's social and cultural context, where the reader's perception is pivotal in the writing process. On the other hand, Asmara (2015) defines EFL writing as the ability to communicate information, ideas, thoughts, and feelings in a written form. He acknowledges that even though writing can be very demanding, it stimulates thinking, learning, and reflection on the English language.

Apparently, these definitions converge on the idea that EFL writing is a conscious process with the purpose of communicating thoughts and feelings in a written way, taking into account the social environment where it takes place.

### **2.1.2. The Writing Process.**

Keeping in mind that writing in English is not linear, but a demanding and fluid process that goes through different steps that require a lot of intellectual effort, some problems related to lack of interest, confidence, and motivation have been observed in its teaching and learning process. In order to overcome these problems, teachers must apply current theories and approaches to make writing instruction more effective (Rashtchi & Ghandi, 2011).

Based on the previous fact, two predominant approaches to writing have emerged in the literature with the purpose of improving students' writing skills and writing instruction. Both product and process approaches will be analyzed in this work, but the researcher considers important to mention that the process approach to writing is significantly relevant for the present study.

#### ***2.1.2.1. The product approach to writing.***

Mourssi (2013) claims that the product approach, which became popular in the 1970s, is a teacher-centered approach that is based on the behaviorism theory since there is no



interaction, negotiation, discussion or feedback among students, or between the teacher and the students.

The product approach can be defined as a traditional approach that focuses on the students' final product. This approach encourages students to analyze the characteristics of a model text with the purpose of imitating it, and producing a new text that is grammatically correct (Palpanadan, Ismail, & Salam, 2015).

Similarly, Hasan and Akhand (2011) state that "in a typical product approach-oriented classroom, students are supplied with a standard sample of text and they are expected to follow the standard to construct a new piece of writing" (p. 78). Besides, these authors highlight that the product approach to writing ignores the context as well as the audience of the piece of writing, focusing only on the final product instead of taking into account the process of how the writing task is produced. The authors additionally claim that it is an individual activity in which the students produce one draft of the text type after controlled practice of its features.

The stages students follow in product approach involve the analysis of the model text by exploring its characteristics related to content, vocabulary, grammar, and organization. Then some controlled and guided writing is carried out with the objective of practicing the characteristics needed for a specific genre. After that, students focus on the organization of ideas rather than on the ideas themselves. Finally, they submit their final product to the teacher to be graded or corrected, being accuracy in grammar and mechanics the most important when grading it (Palpanadan et al., 2015).

As it can be seen, the teacher's role is fundamental in the product approach to writing because it is the instructor's responsibility to make students familiar with certain type of text by giving them models and explaining the grammar and vocabulary used in that genre until

students can reproduce a similar one. Besides, it is part of the teacher's role to give feedback, which is generally based on grammatical and lexical errors. The product approach to writing is not challenging for students since they are just expected to follow the teacher's explanations related to grammar, expressions, and format to produce a product that shares the same characteristics as the given model without paying attention to its content (Hasan & Akhand, 2011).

#### ***2.1.2.2. The process approach to writing.***

The process approach to writing is defined as a sequence of cognitive actions with the purpose of creating a text. This sequence allows students to think about what they are going to write, produce multiple drafts, edit, and give and receive feedback on their writing before presenting the final product (Sun & Feng, 2009). According to Onozawa (2010), it is an approach that focuses on the process of writing rather than on the final product. He acknowledges that this approach helps students find writing strategies that match their style of learning, making students feel more motivated to this arduous task.

Rashtchi and Ghandi (2011) state that this approach, which appeared in the 1980s, is student-centered since it focuses on students' thinking and creating ideas, promoting in that way creativity and the development of efficient writing practices. Tessema (2005) remarks that the process approach of writing highlights the stages the learner goes through in order to produce a text, instead of highlighting the final result, as it is in the product approach. He also recognizes that more emphasis is put on content and organization rather than on grammar and mechanics, which will gradually be developed during the writing process.

The process writing approach comprises five stages that are nonlinear, meaning that students can go back to stages 1 to 4 many times before reaching the final product (Tessema, 2005). These are as follows. The first stage is idea generation. This is where ideas are



generated either through class discussion, pair discussion, or small group discussions. At this stage, reflection and brainstorming play a special role. Once the first stage is complete, the second stage, freewriting, takes place. It entails the development of ideas and points of view about a topic, without being worried about grammar or mechanics. In other words, students do not have a specific format; they are free to write all the ideas that come to their mind.

The third stage is drafting. It means that based on the ideas generated, students will start producing a coherent text. Once the initial written text is produced, the fourth stage, peer editing and peer evaluation, takes place. This stage involves sharing the students' drafts with each other with the objective of receiving useful feedback for revision. The last stage involves the production of the final product after some drafts that have been edited and revised.

Finally, Tessema (2005) expresses that it is crucial for teachers to help students get familiar with the process approach to writing due to the fact that it can make the writing process less stressful and more motivating.

As it can be seen, the process approach to writing fosters creativity and collaborative work. While students are working in groups, they collaborate with each other when generating thoughts and selecting ideas. Besides, feedback is a key point in this process due to the fact that the suggestions given to improve their work are not only provided by the teacher, but also by their peers (Sun & Feng, 2009).

Apart from the benefits it could bring when implementing the process approach to writing, it is important to be aware of the possible problems instructors could face. One of those problems is time constraint, in other words, it unquestionably takes time to go through all the stages in this process because students need to write multiple drafts taking into account the feedback received on their work. Another main aspect that is essential to keep in mind is that





with the purpose of helping students reach their objectives in terms of writing, it is necessary to provide the right support during all the stages of the process (Onozawa, 2010).

To finish, it is important to be aware that the choice of the writing instruction approach will depend on the teachers, the students, and the text type. The product approach could be useful for text types that have a fixed layout as in the case of a business report, while the process approach may be appropriate for text types that require a lot of idea generation as in the case of argumentative essays (Hasan & Akhand, 2011).

## **2.2. How to Teach Writing in English as a Foreign Language**

Learning English is a very complex task since it requires not only to learn its language components (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling), but it also involves learning its language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing); where writing is considered the most difficult skill for language learners to acquire. Thus, a great deal of practice, time, and effort will be needed in order to develop English as a foreign language writing skills (Asmara, 2015).

According to the Ecuadorian EFL Curriculum by the Ministry of Education (2016), teaching writing in English as a foreign language takes a constructivism approach, where the students' needs, interests, and motivation are taken into account. Additionally, learners write something with a reason, intention, or objective in mind that is addressed to a particular audience. Based on their audience, the learners select the content, the register that could be formal or informal, and the tone. In other words, writing is seen as a tool used for communication, where the transmitted message, the context, the purpose, and the reader play an important role.

Besides, the Ecuadorian EFL Curriculum (2016) encourages the use of the process approach to writing since "as students work through each stage in the process, from



brainstorming to editing, they gain valuable insight into giving and receiving feedback and finding ways to express themselves clearly and effectively” (p. 25).

As it can be seen, the process of writing receives special attention in the Ecuadorian EFL curriculum due to the fact that it allows students to develop their writing skills, elaborate ideas, and work in a collaborative way.

### **2.3. Teaching EFL Writing in English ab Initio Classes**

In order to understand teaching EFL writing in English ab Initio classes, it is pivotal to have a clear idea of what the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is and what English ab Initio classes involve.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) is a two-year program offered for students aged 16 to 19. This program was created with the purpose of providing international instruction for people who moved from one place to another for different reasons, guaranteeing in that way a qualification that would be internationally recognized for university entrance (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011).

This program has been defined as a pre-university course that aims at encouraging students to have a significant understanding of the world around them as well as to develop research skills that will make them independent and lifelong learners. It also intends to develop students’ respect for other cultures and for different points of view (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011).

One of the six academic areas of study that the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) offers is Language Acquisition, which entails a classical language course that is taught in Latin and Classical Greek and two modern language courses, Language ab Initio and language B. Language ab Initio is delivered at standard level (SL), while Language B is at high level (HL). The differences between the levels are determined by the complexity



in the syllabus, assessment criteria, and teaching hours. 150 hours are designated for the standard level, while 250 are for the high level (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011).

Therefore, English ab Initio can be defined as a language acquisition course that is taught at standard level. It has been designed for students with little or no knowledge of the language. It aims at developing intercultural understanding and essential skills needed to communicate effectively in English speaking countries through the development of receptive, productive, and interactive skills (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011).

Receptive skills refer to the students' ability to understand written and oral material related to the prescribed themes and topics found in the syllabus. Regarding productive skills, students are able to produce written and spoken language related to the prescribed themes and topics. Finally, interactive skills involve listening and speaking, through which students are able to understand and respond to some information within the prescribed themes and topics (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011). It is relevant to explain that even though the development of productive, receptive, and interactive skills is crucial in English ab initio classes, for research purposes I will focus specifically on writing.

Now that the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme and the English ab initio course have been defined, it is time to focus on teaching EFL writing in English ab initio classes. In this regard, the written production objectives, approaches to teaching and learning, and some hints to teach writing will be presented.

Concerning written production objectives, students are expected to communicate their ideas clearly and effectively in different contexts and for diverse purposes. This means that students will have to use appropriate language depending on the audience and the context where communication takes place. Besides, students will be able to express coherent,



organized, and accurate ideas. Finally, students will develop their critical and creative thinking skills through understanding, analysis, and reflection of the language itself and their work (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011).

Regarding approaches to teaching, the English ab Initio Guide (2011) suggests teaching based on inquiry, teaching focused on conceptual understanding, teaching developed in local and global contexts, teaching focused on effective teamwork and collaboration, differentiated to meet the needs of all learners, and teaching informed by assessment. Approaches to learning entails thinking skills, research skills, communication skills, social, and self-management skills. These approaches will help students develop learning skills in the language acquisition course (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011).

With this in mind, it is worth mentioning that teachers have freedom to construct the course choosing approaches that guarantee creative critical thinking skills as well as independent and collaborative work. Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to develop language skills through active participation. Finally, teachers should make use of authentic material in class so that students can be prepared to face real life situations (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011). Thus, it can be concluded that it is paramount for teachers to consider which approach would be worth adopting in the classroom so that the desired objectives could be reached.

Furthermore, teachers are provided with some hints to apply in teaching writing. It encourages teachers to make students develop and practice writing through a great deal of individual, pair and group activities in class, guaranteeing students' interaction in the target language through active participation. Additionally, the English ab Initio guide states that teaching writing in English ab initio classes must involve special attention not only to forms (grammar and vocabulary), but also to functions, where the language is used actively for a



specific purpose that involves expressing ideas, defending arguments, among others (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011).

### 2.3.1. Written production assessment in English ab initio classes.

Writing is assessed externally, that means that the examinations are set and graded by IB examiners at the end of the second year of the course. In this kind of assessment, students are asked to write two text types presented in two sections. In section A, students will choose to write a text type (minimum 50 words) from two options. This short task is graded out of 7 points. In section B, students will find an extended writing task in which they will have to write a text type (minimum 100 words) from a choice of three, and it will be out of 18 points. Therefore, the final grade for productive skill assessment is out of 25. Students will have an hour to complete this paper (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011). I consider pivotal to mention that section B of this paper is the one I will focus on my research.

Writing tasks from both sections A and B are based on the prescribed topics from the themes provided in the Syllabus. Themes for the period 2013-2019 are as follows: individual and society, leisure and work, and urban and rural environment. (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011).

Table 1  
*Prescribed Themes and Topics for English ab Initio*

<b>Individual and society</b>	<b>Leisure and work</b>	<b>Urban and rural environment</b>
Daily routines	Employment	Environmental concerns
Education	Entertainment	Global issues
Food and drink	Holidays	Neighborhood
Personal details, appearance and character	Media	Physical geography
Physical health	Sport	Town and services
Relationships	Technology	Weather
Shopping	Transport	



The text types students will have to write during examinations for the period 2013-2019 are illustrated in the list.

Table 2

*Text Types in Sections A and B for Productive External Assessments*

<b>Section A</b>	<b>Section B</b>
Advertisement/flyer	Article
Blog	Blog
Email	Brochure
Entry/post on social networking site	Diary
Invitation	Email
List	Entry/post on social networking site
Menu	Essay
Message/note	Interview
Notice	Letters formal/informal
Postcard	Report
Poster	Review

For the first examination 2020, themes to be considered will be 5: identities, experiences, human ingenuity, social organization, and sharing the planet with their corresponding topics. And the text types will be organized into personal, professional, and mass media texts. (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2018).

Three assessment criteria are used to assess writing: language, message, and format. Language criterion assesses the ability to use language effectively and accurately, so that the communication is clear. It also takes into account spelling, vocabulary, and grammatical structures. In other words, the accuracy of the language must contribute to effective communication (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011).

Message criterion involves the inclusion of relevant information and ideas, and the organization of that information or those ideas so that the message is delivered successfully.



The last criterion is format, which comprises register and tone. Tone refers to the attitude of the writer toward a topic or an audience which is evidenced through the selection of words or points of view, while register entails the levels of formality of the language. In other words, the text type should be appropriate to the context, purpose, and audience of the task (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011).

On the basis of information presented above, it can be concluded that students' assessment will focus on their ability to communicate effectively keeping in mind the audience and context, while they make use of appropriate vocabulary and accurate spelling and grammar.

## **2.4. Project-Based Tasks**

Project-Based Tasks, which have appeared as a student-centered approach that structures learning around projects, have gained popularity in education since these tasks provide students with learning experiences relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century such as critical thinking, collaboration, problem solving, among others (Díaz, 2014).

### **2.4.1. Historical background of project-based tasks.**

Literature suggests that Project-Based Tasks have been part of the educational field about the beginning of the 1980s as an important legacy of John Dewey's work. Furthermore, Project-Based Tasks are principally backed up by the constructivist theories of Jean Piaget and social constructivism of Vygotsky, since these tasks represent a student-centered pedagogy (Du & Han, 2016).

Project-Based Learning emerged from John Dewey's theory on experiential and interactive learning in America in the mid-1880s. John Dewey's theory is based on the principle of learning by doing, finding solutions to real problems, and connecting school to life. His theory recognizes the benefits of experiential, student-centered learning where the



student becomes active in the learning process, reflecting in that way the theory of constructivism (Du & Han, 2016).

John Dewey's theory sees learning as an active process of constructing knowledge collaboratively through hands-on authentic tasks in real-world situations. Therefore, through Project-Based Tasks, learners can be involved in genuine activities in which students can experience learning by doing (Jumaat, Tasir, Abd, Mohamad, & Zakiah, 2017).

Later in 1918, Dewey's successor, William Kilpatrick formalized this approach, and it became popular not only in the United States, but also in Europe and Russia. Since then this approach has gained popularity across the world due to the fact that it stimulates students to learn from life, find answers to real questions, and get knowledge about a subject in real contexts (Ulrich, 2016).

Besides, Greeno (2006) has associated Project-Based Tasks with the constructivism theories of Jean Piaget, who has argued that people learn and form meaning based on their experiences, and that teachers must be facilitators in the students' learning process. The constructivism theory perceives learning as a process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring it. In the constructivism theory, learners actively build their knowledge by connecting their previous experiences with new information.

According to this line of research, Jumaat et al., (2017) state that project based work is an instrument that consolidates many practices of the constructivism theory since it takes into account students' prior knowledge as pivotal for constructing new knowledge. Besides, it allows learners to work collaboratively with their peers in authentic activities in real settings.

Another theory that supports Project-Based Tasks is Vygotsky's social constructivism. This theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction with others to build up knowledge. In this theory the role of the teacher changes from being the transmitter of facts





to a facilitator for the students, creating a learner-centered environment where collaborative learning plays a central role (Helle, Tynjala, & Olkinuora, 2006).

In conclusion, Project-Based Tasks perspectives correspond with the philosophy of John Dewey, whose work lies within this constructivist ideology of Jean Piaget and the social constructivism of Vygotsky, fostering dynamic learning, autonomy, and collaboration.

#### **2.4.2. Definition of project-based tasks.**

Many definitions have emerged around this approach. Hedge (1993) defines it as an extended task that integrates language skills with the aim of reaching a goal through planning, gathering of information, discussions, problem/solving strategies, oral or written reporting, and presentation.

Putri et al (2017) define Project-Based Tasks as an instructional approach structured around projects where students are usually given a specific question to answer, a real problem to solve, or an in-depth issue to explore. Students work individually, in pairs, or in groups with the purpose of reaching a common goal. Besides, that work students do involves planning, gathering of information, group discussions, reporting, and displaying of the final product (Thuan, 2018).

Katz and Chard (2000) describe it as a very effective approach that enables learners to work on topics of their interest by using the skills required in real and meaningful life such as critical thinking skills and responsibility. They also recognize that it involves a lot of contact among students.

Besides, Thitivesa and Essien (2013) state that interaction with other students is fundamental to Project-Based Tasks since this approach provides plenty of opportunities for sharing ideas, collaborating, and communicating in authentic contexts. It gives students



freedom to use the linguistic resources they have, and then they can reflect on what they have learned or need to learn.

In spite of the different definitions we have had over the years, it is evident that they all agree on the fact that Project-Based Tasks can promote meaningful learning, critical thinking skills, collaboration, responsibility for their own learning, inquiry, and development of language skills (Díaz, 2014).

#### **2.4.3. Characteristics of Project-Based Tasks.**

The characteristics of Project-Based Tasks seem to be constant among researchers who have studied this approach (Helle et al., 2006; Tomas, 2000).

Five features have been identified in the literature (Helle et al., 2006; Tomas, 2000). The most distinctive characteristic of Project-Based Tasks is that this approach focuses on a challenging question or problem that drives the learning process. This driving question or problem helps students set goals and select procedures that will be followed in order to reach their goals. Besides, the authors argue that the questions and problems foster student's curiosity, innovation, and students' ownership of their learning process.

The second characteristic of Project-Based Tasks is that this approach is constructed around projects with the objective of presenting a final outcome. This process of constructing a final outcome is carried out over a period of time, making student able to work independently as well as collaboratively. It is pivotal to mention that the final outcome can be presented in multiple forms after a negotiation between the teacher and the students. Through their outcomes, students display new skills they have developed during projects.

Investigation is the third characteristic of Project-Based Tasks. In order to answer the questions or find solution to a problem, students plan and conduct research that is goal-



oriented. This research develops students' higher-level thinking skills because they have to summarize, analyze data, and evaluate their findings.

Another characteristic of Project-Based Tasks is that it is student-centered. This means that the role of the teacher changes from being the knowledge provider to being a guide who will make students have more control of their learning process, letting them set objectives, pace, and sequence for their projects. This characteristic fosters students' autonomy and responsibility since they have more unsupervised time during the project execution.

As a fifth characteristic, it is said that project-based work is authentic. This means that Project-Based Tasks are based on real-life challenges or questions, making the project relevant and complex enough to foster students' motivation. Besides, the context in which the project is carried out is real as well as the tasks, the student's role during the project execution, the final outcome of the project, and the audience for the final outcome of the project.

#### **2.4.4. Benefits of Project-Based Tasks in EFL classrooms.**

It is widely recognized that the implementation of Project-Based Tasks in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms has brought copious benefits, ranging from the development of students' language skills to their personal development (Thuan, 2018).

Thuan (2018) acknowledges that project-based work has a significant effect on the development of the four language skills, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. He argues that during Project-Based Tasks, students are involved in authentic activities that require a lot of interaction, resulting in a purposeful use of English. Besides, he recognizes that this kind of tasks promotes natural and meaningful integration of the language skills.

Tessema (2005) highlights that, for instance, a writing project gives students the opportunity to engage in reading since those skills are closely related, especially if the



completion of the writing project requires internet research. Besides, listening and speaking are also integrated in the project because of the collaborative work that is carried out through discussions, analysis, feedback provision, and evaluation.

The development of confidence, independence, autonomy, and collaboration is another benefit that is highlighted when using Project-Based Tasks (Thuan, 2018). In addition, Alan and Stoller (2005) claim that besides language skills and content knowledge improvement, Project-Based Tasks also enhance critical thinking and decision-making abilities, problem-solving skills, social skills, and motivation. Tessema (2005) states that due to the fact that tasks are organized around real-life situations, students will be more motivated to complete the project.

#### **2.4.5. Challenges of Project-Based Tasks in EFL classrooms.**

Apart from having great benefits, Project-Based Tasks also face challenges that cannot be ignored. Marx, Blumenfeld, Krajcik and Soloway (1997) state some obstacles teachers have when implementing this approach in EFL classes. First, this approach has been seen as time consuming since discussions, explorations of ideas, analysis of information, among other activities related to the execution of the project require a large amount of time.

Another challenge faced during Project-Based Tasks implementation is related to classroom management. Teachers are expected to organize and monitor the students' work while maintaining discipline and order, which can be considered demanding. Besides, teachers find it difficult to control the flow of information students have to handle. In this sense, the lessons must be developed in order to ensure that students have access to accurate information while they build up their knowledge.

Providing adequate support for students during Project-Based Tasks is another challenge teacher have to deal with. There must be a balance between students' autonomy and teacher's



support. A final challenge is assessment. Teachers are expected to assess not only students' understanding and the product of the project, but also the process of the project that involves organization, group participation, and presentation of the information. Thus, designing effective assessment can be a hard task for many teachers.

It is also important to keep in mind that it takes almost 3 years for teacher to be competent in using this approach, and that even teachers who are experts at managing classes find that they do not have enough time to finish the planned activities and give feedback to their students. Furthermore, teacher must have a conceptual understanding of the characteristics, the process of Project-Based Tasks, and how to apply them in class (Marx et al., 1997). This means that teachers must design well-planned activities that promote investigation with the purpose of answering the driving question in a collaborative environment.

It can be concluded that even though English teachers and EFL students face many challenges when being involved in Project-Based Tasks, the benefits undoubtedly outweigh the obstacles this approach can have (Du & Han, 2016).

#### **2.4.6. Process of implementation of Project-Based Tasks in EFL classrooms.**

Four general stages have been proposed by Kriwas (1999) as cited in Fragoulis (2009, pp. 114-115) as a valuable guide in the process of implementing Project-Based Tasks in EFL classrooms.

*Stage 1: Speculation.* This stage aims to arouse students' interest and curiosity toward certain topics that are in the curriculum or that emerge after a dialogue with the students. The final outcome of this stage is the selection of the project topic.

*Stage 2: Designing the project activities.* This is where the formation of groups and assigning of roles take places. Besides, the organization and structure of the project will be



done, taking into account methodology, sources of information, activities that will be carried out, etc.

*Stage 3: Conducting the project activities.* At this stage, the groups gather information, analyze it, and prepare the final product. This is the stage where discussions about issues related to collaboration, personal relations, and feedback take place.

*Stage 4: Evaluation.* This last stage refers to the assessment of the project, where the students discuss if the initial goals have been reached. They also evaluate the implementation of the process and final products.

Once the general stages for implementing Project-Based Tasks have been analyzed, it is imperative to establish the steps that must be followed in order to successfully apply this approach in EFL classrooms. In this line, Alan and Stoller (2005, pp. 12-13) suggest ten steps to optimize the benefits of Project-Based Tasks in EFL classrooms. This ten-step process, which is detailed in *Maximizing the Benefits of Project Work in Foreign Language Classrooms*, is as follows:

*Step 1: Students and instructor agree on a theme for the project.* This is the step where the students and the teacher negotiate and make a decision about the topic for the project. Teachers encourage students to choose specific topics that interest or inspire them, and that are connected to the studied content.

*Step 2: Students and instructor determine the final outcome.* Here, the objectives, the audience, and the final outcome of the project are determined by the teacher and the students. The final outcome could be a letter, an essay, an oral presentation, among others.

*Step 3: Students and instructor structure the project.* This is the step where the students and the teacher structure the project by reflecting on the students' responsibilities, roles, and



collaborative work. Students determine who will conduct interviews, do research, take pictures, among other things.

*Step 4: Instructor prepares students for the demands of information gathering.* The teacher provides students with the necessary language skills for working on the project, and organizes sessions to prepare them for gathering information. For example, if the students are going to use interviews as part of their project, the teacher will plan tasks in which they will have to write questions. If the students are required to write formal letters, they will be instructed in the process of writing them.

*Step 5: Students gather information.* This is where students collect information using interviews, library and internet research, or any other methods they consider appropriate depending on their projects.

*Step 6: Instructor prepares students to compile and analyze data.* Once the information has been collected, students are provided not only with strategies related to data analysis, but also with language strategies (conversation gambits) to make discussions about data collection flow smoothly.

*Step 7: Students compile and analyze information.* Groups of students organize, analyze, and synthesize the information they consider relevant.

*Step 8. Instructor prepares students for the language demands of the final activity.* This is where teachers plan activities with the purpose of improving the students' language skills, which will result in a successful presentation of the final product of the project.

*Step 9: Students present the final product.* The final product is presented depending on the objectives set at the beginning of the process.



*Step 10: Students evaluate the project.* Students reflect on what they have learned during the project regarding content and language, and give recommendations about how projects could be improved in the future. Besides, students receive feedback on their performance.

To sum up, this chapter provides us with a clear idea of the theoretical foundations related to writing, how it must be taught, and how it is assessed in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. Besides, the foundations of Project-Based Tasks are explored as an approach that could be used to improve not only the students' writing skills, but also their collaboration, autonomous learning, and motivation.





## **Chapter 3**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter provides a summary of the most significant studies on Project-Based Tasks carried out in EFL classes and analyses the major findings related to EFL written production by applying Project-Based Tasks.

#### **3.1. Project-Based Tasks in EFL Classrooms**

Literature suggests that many studies have been conducted regarding the application of Project-Based Tasks in English language classes with great outcomes in improving students' language skills, critical thinking skills, collaboration, and communication (Du & Han, 2016).

A case study about the implementation of Project-Based Tasks for intermediate and high – intermediate EFL students was carried out by Alan and Stoller (2005) in the school of Foreign Languages at Anadula University in Turkey. As part of the project, students had to evaluate the effectiveness of the local tramcar system by means of a public forum and bulletin board display. This month-long project required interviews, surveys, and library and web research. The data were collected thorough observations, and the results demonstrated that Project-Based Tasks promoted students 'critical thinking skills since they were engaged in synthesis activities. Besides, Project-Based Tasks improved students' language skills as well as their confidence in using English.

Based on the case study that Alan and Stoller (2005) conducted, some recommendations for using Project-Based Tasks in EFL classes were stated. They advised teachers to develop plans taking into account students' needs and interests as well as institutional goals and existing resources. Special attention should be paid to the opening activity, which must promote students' curiosity and expectations for the final activity. They also said that it was crucial to set learning goals and specify content, tasks, and skills that would be developed.



Besides, the authors considered important to engage students in the project by giving them the opportunity to make contributions to it, so that the students develop a sense of ownership toward the project.

In addition, teachers should create an environment where students can use English for real communicative purposes, where the four language skills are integrated. Moreover, it is essential to provide explicit instruction with the purpose of not only improving their language skills, but also their research abilities. Finally, Alan and Stoller (2005) presented some possibilities for project final outcomes, which included brochures, class newspapers, debates, bulletin board displays, oral presentations, posters, research papers, letters, written reports, among others.

Another qualitative study on the implementation of Project-Based Tasks was conducted by Farouck (2016) on 30 university students in an English as a Foreign Language course in Japan. This course lasted fifteen weeks. The objective of this study was to find out how students learn a foreign language, what language skills EFL students might develop, and what perceptions EFL students might have toward Project-Based Tasks. In this study, the researcher used the Project-Based Language Learning (PBLL) approach, which is Project-Based Learning (PBL) for language acquisition. The participants were grouped in pairs for working on their projects. The PBLL approach adopted in this study had seven phases. The design of the PBLL curriculum was the first phase. During this phase, learners were also informed about the type of activities that would be done during the projects, the type of research that would be conducted, and how group participation, written reports, and oral presentations would be assessed. The second phase involved a description of the scope of the projects, instruction on how to select the driving question or topic, and group organization. As a next phase, the participants had to select the driving question, which was considered the most important part of the project since the question or topic had to be motivating for them.



Once the students had selected the driving question, they were provided with technological environments that included Moodle LMS and Skype to be used for communication among themselves. Besides, mini Ipads connected to Internet and digital cameras for getting information were also given. During the fifth phase, students received instruction on grammar and vocabulary relevant to their projects. They also learned how to express their opinions, how to give directions, and how to describe locations. This was the phase where students received feedback from their partners by using an online rubric and forum. Then, they learned presentation skills related to oral presentation structure and effective body language. The sixth phase encompassed the development of their presentations based on their research findings. The last phase was the presentation of the final product that involved an oral presentation in front of the class. After that, the best groups presented their findings to guests and external judges in order to choose the best presentation.

The data were collected by means of questionnaires and analyzed according to the purpose of this study. Firstly, the effect of PBL on willingness to communicate was explored. In this regard, most students reported that they had increase their confidence levels, relieved anxiety, and developed their interpersonal skills, improving in that way their motivation to communicate in English. Some students indicated that they had also improved their interpersonal skills such as cooperation, kindness, and leadership as well as skills related to presentations. Secondly, in regard to how students learned English during PBL instruction, it was found that most of the students agreed on the fact that they improved receptive as well as productive skills through in-class activities, collaboration with peers, internet, and dictionaries. Finally, referring content knowledge and technological skills, students indicated that they had improved their search skill and learned how to use PowerPoint/Keynote, Ms Word and Ms Excel, and IPhoto.



The author reached the conclusion that PBL enhanced independent learning, developed language skills including complex grammar structures and vocabulary, and reduced anxiety that resulted in willingness to communicate in English. Besides, the author stated that this approach achieved the main goal of learning a foreign language that is communication and real usage. Additionally, PBL improved students' interpersonal skills and made students become familiar with the use of communication and information technologies, preparing students in that way for 21<sup>st</sup> century environments.

A mixed-method study was also undertaken by Putri et al (2017) with the purpose of presenting the effects of Project-Based Tasks on students' productive skills in a public school in Indonesia. Twenty-eight students of the seventh grade were part of this research. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected with the purpose of answering two research questions. The first question intended to establish if there was a significant difference in students' English productive skills before and after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks, and the second one focused on how Project-Based Tasks influenced the teaching and learning process. The quantitative data were analyzed by means of a paired sample t-test, while the qualitative data were analyzed through Miles and Huberman's model that involved data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

The results from the quantitative data showed that Project-Based Tasks improved significantly the students' ability to write and speak in English as a foreign language. A paired sample T-test was used to show a significant difference on the acquisition of productive skills before and after using this approach. On the other hand, the qualitative data analyzed the effect of Project-Based Tasks on the teaching and learning process. Thus, the observation checklists identified the students' learning process in the classroom, the open-ended questionnaires explored how students responded to Project-Based Tasks at the end of



every treatment, and the field notes were required to get information about the teacher's perspective along the process.

Results from the observation checklists revealed that students enjoyed the learning process, which was confirmed by their active participation in the classroom activities. The open ended questionnaire showed students' disposition and interest to participate in groups while they created a project in a collaborative way. A feeling of strong enthusiasm was expressed by students during interviews, and it was easily seen in pictures the authors included in the article. Data from the field notes demonstrated that the teacher was strongly motivated to use Project-Based Tasks since this approach was considered effective to make students engage in the classroom activities. Besides, the teacher expressed to be satisfied because students were eager to participate.

The qualitative results also confirmed improvement in students' confidence due to collaborative work and support they received from their classmates while working in groups. Besides, it was also found that students learned how to work in groups and how to organize work in a responsible way. Creativity was another element mentioned by students during interviews since they were required to give new ideas and thoughts to make their projects more appealing. Collaboration and self-esteem were also developed during Project-Based Tasks when students had to exchange ideas and information, give opinions, evaluate their classmates' work, make decisions, solve problems, reach consensus, among other things.

It was concluded that this study provided empirical evidence of the significant effect of Project-Based Tasks on enhancing students' ability to write and speak English as a foreign language. Furthermore, results indicated that Project-Based Tasks promoted students' motivation, enthusiasm, self-confidence, creativity, and collaboration. Regarding the teacher, it was found that Project-Based Tasks fostered teacher's satisfaction and motivation to the teaching process.



Sapan, Katijah, Zulhaimi, Abdul and Ramli (2019) also used a quantitative and qualitative research design to conduct a study on the effects of Project-Based Tasks on students' English skills. They specifically intended to examine students' perceptions of the implementation of projects in the English classroom and how Project-Based Tasks can improve students' English skills. The participants were 77 undergraduate students, 26 males and 51 females. The participants were second-year students of two faculties, Faculty of International Finance Labuan and Faculty of Computing and Informatics at the University Malaysia Sabah Labuan International Campus. They were enrolled in a 42-hour English course, English for Occupational Purposes, that has been designed to provide students with effective communication skills at the workplace.

In order to collect data, questionnaires were applied during the last week of the semester. The questionnaires contained demographic questions, Likert scale questions, and open-ended questions. During the intervention process that lasted 12 weeks, the students worked in groups of 4 or 5 with the purpose of developing a new product or service for a company. This new product or service was presented through a video, a PowerPoint presentation, or a poster. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), which is a software for analyzing all kinds of data, was used for frequency analysis of the quantitative data, while identification of repeating patterns was employed for qualitative data.

Results showed that the students had a positive perception toward the implementation of Project-Based Tasks since they indicated that through the use of projects, they had a better understanding of the content of the course aimed at teaching. Besides, the majority of the students (93.6 %) reported that this approach made them improve their interest in learning English. Key elements the students identified as positive during projects were authenticity and realism because through projects they had the opportunity to know how the real work environment was.



Regarding how Project-Based Tasks could improve students' English skills, findings revealed that 96,1 % of students reported improvement in their oral and written communication. Students mentioned that their oral communication was improved since they were required to speak English during presentations, discussions, meetings, even without the teacher's presence. Pronunciation was also improved because of the interaction they had with their team members. Students also reported improvement in writing. They stated that Project-Based Tasks helped them improve grammar and vocabulary since they were exposed to real documents such as resumes, notices business proposals, where they learned new grammar structures and vocabulary related to employment, valuable for their future. As a result of this exposure, they were able to write real documents with correct grammar structures and varied vocabulary.

To sum up, the authors showed that Project-Based Tasks helped students increase not only their communication skills, speaking and writing, but also their interest in learning English through the use of authentic materials in meaningful contexts for them.

### **3.2. Project-Based Tasks and the Development of EFL Written Production**

As previously mentioned, research on Project-Based Tasks have shown positive results on enhancing collaborative skills, motivation, critical thinking skills, and language skills in general; now it is time to focus on empirical studies on Project-Based Tasks and writing.

Thitivesa and Essien (2013) conducted a quantitative investigation aimed to gauge the effect of Project-Based Tasks on EFL students' written production, focusing on writing conventions (mechanics, usage, and sentence formation). This study took place in Thailand at Rajabhat University. A group of 38, fourth year EFL students participated in the study. They had a lower intermediate English proficiency level. The intervention lasted 14 weeks. The purpose of this study was to explore the use of the writing conventions after implementing



Project-Based Tasks. Three features of writing conventions were analyzed: mechanics, usage, and sentence formation. Mechanics included spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Usage referred to the way in which words or phrases were used, involving word order, subject-verb agreement, and verb tense. Lastly, sentence formation encompassed the structure of sentences.

In order to implement Project-Based Tasks, 8 steps were followed. Step 1 involved students' interest arousal and topic selection. Step 2 comprised the selection of the final outcome of the project, which was an article review. Step 3 focused on the structure of the project. Step 4 was dedicated for writing instruction. During step 5, students collected data outside the classroom. Step 6 was devoted for data analysis. At this stage, students started organizing and writing the article review. Step 7 encouraged students to revise their work based on the feedback they received until they submitted their final outcome. During step 8, students reflected on the project and on the language they have acquired during the writing process. It is important to mention that the conventions of writing were used at different points in the project, and they were practiced in genuine contexts.

Written works and a summative achievement test were used to collect data. Learners' written works were collected two times with the purpose of observing the progression of revision, while the summative achievement tests were used to measure correctness of the conventions at sentence level. They were analyzed by mean score, standard deviation, and percentage.

Results from the study showed great outcomes in writing regarding mechanics, usage, and sentence formation. Even though students obtained good results in all three features, the author highlighted that mechanics and usage exhibited a better score due to the fact that students were exposed to different texts, which served them as models of proper use of the two features.



Based on the results of this study, the researcher concluded that Project-Based Tasks could be seen as an ideal context for learning writing, in which communication played a special role. Through Project-Based Tasks, students concentrated on conveying the message while applying knowledge of writing conventions at the same time.

Another quantitative study was conducted with the objective of examining if project-based learning could improve students' writing capability in an EFL classroom by Sholihah (2017). The participants were 35 students of the fourth semester of the English Department at Widya Dharma University in Indonesia. The data were obtained from writing tests taken before and after the intervention. An *Analytical Scoring Rubric* created by Brown and Bailey in 1984 was employed to analyze the students' pre-tests and post-tests. The elements considered in this analytical rubric included organization, content, syntax, mechanics, and vocabulary. The results from the tests were analyzed by comparing the pre-tests and post-tests means to see if there was improvement on student's writing skills.

The intervention was carried out during 12 sessions. Each session lasted ninety minutes. During the intervention, students were divided into groups, and each group had to write different text types that included report texts, explanation texts, hortatory texts, and analytical exposition texts. The process approach to writing was also part of the intervention.

Results from the pre-test showed that students obtained low achievement in writing, being 65.31 the mean score. The analysis of the rubric found that the students made grammar and punctuation mistakes, they were not able to use appropriate vocabulary, and they could not express their ideas clearly. Finally, it was not observed a logical organization in their writing tasks that must include introduction, body, and conclusion.

The post-tests results revealed that students had improved their writing ability since their writing tasks presented good organization, where the ideas were delivered successfully by using



appropriate vocabulary and correct grammar structures and punctuation. The mean score went from 65.31 in the pre-test to 75.50 in the post-test. To conclude, the author indicated that Project-Based Tasks enhanced students' participation in writing tasks as well as their writing capability.

A more recent quantitative study on the effects of Project-Based Tasks on EFL students' writing skills was conducted by Aghayani and Hajmohammadi in 2019. Twenty-eight male EFL students, ranging from 14 to 16 years old, at a language institute in Iran participated in the study. Based on random sampling method, the twenty-eight students were divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group, each consisting of 14 EFL students. All students had an intermediate English level according to the *Oxford Placement Test*. This test was taken with the purpose of having two homogeneous groups before the intervention.

The control group received traditional instruction, meanwhile the experimental group received project-based instruction, where students did individual work and participated in pair work activities as well as in group discussions. Books on writing instruction were also provided for the students, and a lot of writing activities were done in class collaboratively. The intervention lasted two months and was conducted during ten sessions.

In order to answer the research question that aimed at investigating if Project-Based Tasks had significant effect on EFL students' writing skills, a pre-test and a post-test were administered. Both groups had 30 minutes to write about a given topic during pre-tests and post-tests, but it is worth mentioning that a different topic was provided for the post-test.

Results showed that there was no significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores in the control group. In contrast, there was significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores in the experimental group. A paired sample t-test was used to



compare the post-test scores of the students in both groups, which revealed that Project-Based Tasks indeed had significant effect on students' ability to write. In sum, it was found that students obtained higher scores after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks, and the authors identified collaborative environment as an aid to improve and promote students' ability to write. Thus, the authors stated that Project-Based Tasks could assist teachers in increasing students' writing ability in EFL contexts.

Besides quantitative studies, qualitative investigations have also been carried out on Project-Based Tasks and writing. For instance, Tessema (2005) conducted a study with a qualitative research design on project-based tasks with the purpose of stimulating writing. Forty-five EFL students at the English Language Institute at Alemaya University in Ethiopia participated in the study. The implementation covered two weeks. The main objective of this study was to enhance student's motivation to writing through Project-Based Tasks. Students were required to write a short problem/solution essay of three or more pages. Three steps that matched the logical organization of problem/solution essays were followed. The first step focused on problem description. The topic of poverty was chosen for the project since it was a real problem in Ethiopia that was meaningful and motivating for the students to explore. At this stage, students brainstormed and started freewriting some ideas about the topic. Then, the students were organized in groups of 3 to 5, for over 3 to 5 days with the purpose of investigating about poverty and discussing their findings. Students were encouraged to collect data from different sources that included interviews, journals, newspapers, books, and internet. The instruments for field research such as interviews and questionnaires were developed in groups. The teacher helped students by checking the methods for developing those instruments. Finally, students were asked to use the ideas obtained from brainstorming activities, discussions, and research to write two or three paragraphs introducing the problem



of poverty and relating it to poverty in their country. This introduction was exchanged with a partner for peer editing and revision.

The second step intended to determine the causes of the problem, where the students worked in pairs and groups discussing ideas and thoughts about causes of poverty. Moreover, they wrote drafts, exchanged drafts for peer revision, and edited their work. Finally, students revised their drafts individually, considering the feedback given by their partners.

Additionally, students revised the instruments for interviews and questionnaires constructed to get information about solutions to poverty, and those instruments were applied to members of their community.

Proposing a solution to poverty was the third step. Once the students have collected data from interviews and questionnaires, they started freewriting again. Then, the students worked collaboratively in pairs or groups to suggest solutions. Students used the results from research to write two or three paragraphs containing solutions to poverty. They got involved in peer editing, drafting until they did a final revision. As it can be seen, students worked individually, in pairs, and in small groups during Project-Based Tasks. Besides, students wrote different drafts, revised them, and polished the essays before submitting them to the teacher.

In this study, teacher's observation and a questionnaire were used to obtain data about the students' feelings toward writing. Based on the teacher's observation, it was concluded that students were motivated to writing because of two main reasons. The first one referred to the relevance of the topic and the second one involved collaborative work and group interaction. It was stated that students were emotionally involved in the writing task since students had the opportunity to conduct authentic research in order to write an essay with solutions to a real social problem. Regarding results obtained from the questionnaire, it was highlighted that students found the writing task motivating, relevant, clear, and satisfying.



To sum up, Tessema (2005) reached the conclusion that using project-based task Project-Based Tasks, when accompanied by the process approach to writing, was valuable to motivate students. It indeed engaged and stimulated students in the process of foreign language writing because they could have the opportunity to work collaboratively and write about an interesting and useful topic that was meaningful to them.

Another qualitative study was undertaken by Ratminingsih (2015) in SMAN 1 Singaraja, which is a senior high school in Indonesia. This research, which had a case study design, aimed at investigating the students' perceptions toward writing after using Project-Based Tasks. As part of the project, the students had to take a short trip to an interesting place they had previously selected, take pictures, and write a recount text as the product of the project. An interview guideline constituted the main instrument in this study, which was conducted in the students' first language after the intervention process in order to get accurate information about their opinions and feelings towards the use of personal photos to improve writing as part of Project-Based Tasks. Data were also gathered from results of writing assessment of their projects. Results from the interviews were analyzed descriptively in a qualitative way, and the students' writing work was analyzed descriptively by using analytical scoring rubric.

During the intervention process that lasted two weeks, students received instruction on how to write a recount text, which is a type of text that retells events that happened in the past. Then the teacher divided the class into six groups consisting of 5 to 6 students each, where students determined the photos to be used, and they started writing. The group members worked collaboratively to analyze their first draft of the project. The criteria used to analyze the text were content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Finally, students in groups revised and edited their work based on the comments given by the teacher until their writing tasks were submitted.

After the treatment, six students were interviewed. The nine questions aimed at obtaining information about the students' perceptions toward EFL writing, problems faced by students during the writing process, and benefits of Project-Based Tasks related to writing. Three main findings were obtained from interviews. Regarding students' perceptions toward writing and its problems, it was found that students considered writing difficult since they were not able to develop and organize their ideas due to the lack of grammar and vocabulary knowledge before the intervention. But after the intervention, the students showed a positive perception toward writing due to group work, which was categorized as a benefit of Project-Based Tasks. The second finding was that learners reported that "working collaboratively in group made them be motivated to write, engaged in sharing their opinions as well as reduced their anxiety feelings" (Ratminingsih, 2015, p. 113). Finally, the trip and the use of photographs made students feel happy, satisfied, and motivated to make their project. All students considered the use of personal photographs as a valuable source to develop their writing skills successfully.

In conclusion, the author suggested the use of Project-Based Tasks and personal photographs as an alternative to enhance students' writing ability. On one hand, interaction and discussion were key elements obtained from collaborative work done during projects that assisted students in improving writing; on the other hand, personal photographs provided students with information related to their feelings and personal experiences that reinforced creativity, and made students improve their writing in terms of ideas development, sentence organization, vocabulary improvement, and grammar accuracy.

Another qualitative case study was conducted by Salsabila (2018) at a private Islamic Junior School in West Bandung, West Java, in Indonesia. This study aimed at answering a research question that focused on analyzing the contribution of Project-Based Tasks to learners' writing development. The author stated that due to the fact that research on Project-



Based Tasks related to teaching writing was still limited, this study tried to fill the gap in the literature by explaining how this approach could develop students' writing ability regarding procedural texts. Even though thirty students were involved in this study, only three of them were the focus of this investigation. They represented high achieving, middle achieving, and low achieving learners.

The data were gathered through classroom observation, learners' writing, and interviews. The students were required to write a procedural text, and only three samples of those texts were deliberately selected as a diagnostic writing to represent high achieving, middle achieving, and low achieving learners. After the intervention process that followed the steps suggested by Stoller (2002), three samples of procedural texts from the learners' last drafts were also collected. Then these collected samples were analyzed considering the schematic structure, social function, and linguistic features of procedural texts. The social function referred to how instructions were presented to the reader. The schematic structure involved the organization of the text in which goals, materials, and steps must be presented. Lastly, linguistic features encompassed the use of grammar structures such as imperatives, conjunctions, adverbs of manner, and transitivity system necessary to write procedural texts.

During classroom observation, the intervention process was videotaped and the researcher took notes during eight sessions of important information that was not captured by the recorder about the implementation of Project-Based Tasks to teach writing. Interviews were conducted with the purpose of recording students' opinions about the stage of Project-Based Tasks they considered as the most effective when learning to write. The data obtained from classroom observation were triangulated with the data from the analysis of the text samples and from the interviews to answer the research question.

After analyzing the students' diagnostic writing and the final draft, it was concluded that high, mid, and low achieving students demonstrated improvement in writing procedural texts.



Thus, regarding schematic structures, it was concluded that high, middle, and low achieving students succeeded in presenting goals, materials, and steps required in procedural texts.

Grammatical features also exhibited improvement, which was observed when students used simple present in the imperative or command form. Besides, they were able to show order when listing actions. In addition, students used different temporal conjunctions and demonstrated good control in achieving coherence.

In conclusion, findings showed that Project-Based Tasks helped students develop their writing ability since they were able to grasp the concept of a procedural text, which involved social function, schematic structures, and grammar features. Results from the classroom observation and interviews revealed that students exhibited positive reactions toward Project-Based Tasks as a method to develop writing, and as a result from their opinions, it was established that the stage that the students found as the most successful in helping them write procedural texts was the gathering information stage. They selected this stage because they expressed that they got valuable information and ideas after interviewing their friends.

Mix-method studies have also been part of research done on Project-Based Tasks and writing. Sadeghi et al (2016) used both qualitative and quantitative data in order to investigate the impact of Project-Based Tasks on comparison and contrast paragraph writing skills. This quasi-experimental study was carried out at Sadra Language Institute in Yasouj, Iran. Thirty-six EFL students, between 16 and 23 years old, participated in the study. This research aimed at investigating the effect of Project-Based Tasks on EFL student's writing skills. It specifically intended to determine if there was an impact on EFL student's comparison and contrast paragraph writing skills after receiving project-based learning instruction.

According to the *Oxford Placement Test* (OPT), the participants had an intermediate English level. This study had two groups, an experimental group and a comparison group,





with 18 students each. A comparison and contrast paragraph writing pre-test was administered, and after 10 weeks of intervention, a comparison and contrast paragraph writing post-test was used to compare the results.

Project-based language learning was applied to the experimental group while the comparison group received traditional instruction. Both groups were taught by the same instructor over the same period of time, and the same book was used. The pre-tests as well as the post-tests that were applied to both groups were exactly the same. It is worth mentioning that after the post test, students from the experimental group were required to fill an opinion questionnaire to record information about their attitude toward Project-Based Tasks.

Keeping in mind that this study focused on the achievement of structures of comparison and contrast paragraphs, the frequency of the following contrast and comparison items were analyzed: topic sentence effectiveness, topic development, and contrast and comparison structures that involved a number of adjectives, attached sentences, punctuation, connectors, among others. The findings indicated that there was no significant difference between the pre-tests of the experimental and the comparison group. In contrast, the results of the post-tests indicated that the experimental group performed better than the comparison group. Therefore, it was proven that students who received project-based instruction enhanced their writing skills compared to the ones who received instruction based on students' textbooks.

After analyzing the students' opinions towards Project-Based Tasks, the authors suggested that the improvement in writing skills occurred due to interaction among classmates and the responsibility students had in performing their roles in their groups. Additionally, Project-Based Tasks encouraged healthy competition with other groups, which resulted in more effort and excitement. Finally, the authors stated that students felt valued, enthusiastic, happy, skillful, and knowledgeable for producing something different.

Another mixed-method study was carried out in SMPN 3 Kuta Selatan School in Indonesia by Praba, Artini and Ramendra (2018). The participants were ninth grade students. The aim of this research was to investigate the effects of Project-Based Tasks on students' writing skills in English in a foreign language environment. This study adopted an embedded mixed-method design since the quantitative data constituted the main source of information, whereas the qualitative data played a supplementary role. In order to collect quantitative data, a pre-test and a post-test were administered by means of a writing test, which consisted in writing a Report Text. Observation and a guided interview were used for qualitative data. Regarding data analysis, a t-test was employed for quantitative data, while data reduction, display and conclusion drawing were employed for qualitative information.

Findings revealed improvement on students' writing scores, whose overall mean score went from 68,5 in the pre-test to 81 in the post-test, concluding that there was a significant effect of Project-Based Tasks on students' writing skills. Besides, content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics were also explored in order to analyze the student's writing improvement. Regarding content, it was found that students improved their writing ability to state ideas by increasing the number of sentences in the paragraphs. Organization also exhibited improvement since the sentences were structured coherently. Referring to grammar and vocabulary, it was seen that the selection of words was varied, and that the sentences presented accurate structure. Finally, in terms of mechanics, only a few errors in spelling and punctuation were observed.

From the interviews conducted to students, it was found that the implementation of project-based tasks fostered critical thinking skills and improved students' interaction during group work. From the teacher's observation, it was stated that Project-Based Tasks developed communication skills since students had to focus on conveying a message that was clear, and at the same time, they had to apply knowledge of writing conventions to make their writing



understandable. It is important to mention that the conventions were introduced and practice in authentic contexts during the different stages of the project.

To sum up, the authors concluded that Project-Based Tasks significantly improved students 'writing skills in English as a foreign language regarding content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. It was also found that Project-Based Tasks promoted communication, interaction, collaborative work, and the development of critical thinking skills and creativity.

Shanti, Syahril and Koto (2016) conducted a classroom action research study titled "Project-Based Learning Approach to Improve Students' Ability to Write Descriptive Text" at SMAN I Bengkulu Selatan Secondary School in Indonesia. The research was conducted in two cycles. The aims of this study were to examine the effectiveness of using project-based learning in developing EFL writing skills and to identify which project-based learning step was the most influential when writing. The participants were 35 tenth grade students, 10 females and 25 males. The instruments used to collect the data were writing tests, observation checklists, and interviews.

From the writing tests, the five aspects that were analyzed included content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. These aspects were analyzed by means of a writing rubric by Heaton (1988). The writing tests were applied at the end of each cycle, and their results were compared. Therefore, results indicated that students presented improvement in all aspects in cycle 2 rather than in cycle 1. It was demonstrated that the students' mean score in cycle 1 went from 70.45 to 80.31 in cycle 2.

In order to identify which, step in Project-Based Tasks influenced students' writing ability improvement, interviews and an observation checklist were employed. It is essential to mention that the researchers followed 6 steps when implementing Project-Based Tasks, and



they were as follows. “1) Start with the Essential Question, 2) Design a Plan for the Project, 3) Create a Schedule, 4) Monitor the Students and the Progress of the Project, 5) Assess the Outcome, 6) Evaluate the Experiences” (Shanti et al., 2016, p. 51). Results showed that the fourth step of Project-Based Tasks helped students improve their writing skills because this is the step where the project development took place, the teacher monitored students, and plenty of collaborative work was carried out. Collaborative work provided situations where students supported each other, and it enhanced positive attitudes toward writing.

To conclude, the results showed that Project-Based Tasks significantly improved students’ ability to write a descriptive text, which was proven by the increase of the students’ mean score in the second cycle. Besides, based on observations and interviews, it was found that the step which made students improve their writing skills was step 4 since it fostered collaborative work, elevated their motivation, and provided them with more opportunities to practice writing since it was seen as an authentic form of learning.

It is worth mentioning a valuable study that was conducted by Artini et al., in 2018. This study had three objectives. The first one was to document the procedure followed to develop project-based learning activities for EFL learners. The second one was to validate these PBL activities through expert judgment, and finally to apply these PBL activities in a junior high school with the purpose of examining the impact of Project-Based Tasks on EFL writing skills as well as on students’ attitudes toward learning to write.

In order to develop project-based learning activities, interviews to teachers were conducted to get information about potentials and problems when implementing Project-Based Tasks. Besides, an analysis of the EFL curriculum was done in order to identify topics and opportunities for implementing this approach. Therefore, six themes were chosen and project-based activity plans were developed containing basic competency, learning materials, indicators, and a description of the projects. A list of themes and possible topics were also



developed. Finally, formats on how to assess the projects, a self-reflection form, and interviews guidelines were also elaborated.

As a second step, all PBL activities, assessment formats, and interviews were gathered and sent to three expert judges who validated the content and categorized it as excellent. Two of the expert judges were lecturers in EFL education at university level, and the other judge was a senior English teacher in a junior high school in Bali.

As a third step, a quasi-experimental study was carried out with the purpose of examining the impact of project-based learning on EFL writing skills as well as on students' attitudes toward learning writing. This investigation involved 36 junior high school students from a public school in Indonesia. These students worked with the project based learning activities that were previously developed by the researchers. While the teacher executed the planned Project-Based Tasks, the researchers observed and collected data by means of anecdotal records and pictures. Results from the researchers' observation demonstrated that the Project-Based Tasks generated motivation and enthusiasm, perceived from their active commitment to work on their projects in groups and eagerness to share ideas during group discussions. It was observed that students developed their communication skills as a result from group work, where they had to use expressions to communicate during collaborative work.

Data from the interviews showed that students were not only positive toward learning writing, but also toward speaking since this approach provided students with a real context for using English in a meaningful way. The researchers also reported improvement in the following aspects: courtesy, honesty, self-discipline, confidence, responsibility, cooperation, tolerance, curiosity, and respect.



Data were also gathered through an individual writing task that constituted the pre-test and the post-test. A t-test was used to compare students' achievement before and after the intervention. Results indicated that the implementation of Project-Based Tasks significantly improved learner's ability to write in an EFL classroom. It was concluded that Project-Based Tasks not only improved the ability to write, but it was also revealed that there was a positive attitude toward learning writing since students showed enthusiasm, motivation, respect for others, collaboration, and tolerance during the different stages of the project.

In conclusion, this overview of the research studies about the application of Project-Based Tasks in EFL classes are relevant to the current study because they suggest that through the implementation of Project-Based Tasks, students are encouraged to be, among other things, independent learners, critical thinkers, inquirers, reflective and good communicators; characteristics that match the International Baccalaureate students' profiles. Besides, these studies indicate that EFL writing and students' attitude toward it can be improved through project-based work.

It is essential to mention that at present, the effects of Project-Based Tasks on International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme students have not been studied yet. No research regarding the topic has been found. Therefore, the necessity for studying the topic is crucial because many public schools in Ecuador are offering this program as part of the improvement of its educational system. In this way, the present study seeks to fill out some gaps concerning this issue with the main intention of assisting teachers in their needs when teaching English as a Foreign Language in English ab initio classes.

The support offered through the implementation of Project-Based Tasks in English ab initio classes, mainly has to do with the aim of enhancing IBDP students' writing skills as well as exploring their perceptions toward writing; especially due to the fact that IBDP teachers are encouraged to look for the best approaches that can fit the IBDP requirements.



## **Chapter 4**

### **Methodology**

This chapter will describe the methodology used to develop this research. It contains the description of the context, the participants, the method selected for conducting this study, the procedure, and the data collection instruments.

#### **4.1. Research Context**

In Ecuador, International Baccalaureate programs started to be offered in private schools in 1981, and since then many private schools were authorized to offer IB programs, which are defined as challenging programs of international education that share a common vision, curriculum, and rigorous assessment. Later in 2006, the Ecuadorian government decided to support the development of the Diploma Programme in public schools with the purpose of improving and transforming the Ecuadorian secondary education. The International Baccalaureate Organization worked with the Ministry of Education to select, support, train, and authorize public schools (Barnett et al., 2013).

This study was carried out at Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School, which is a public school in Cuenca that started with the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in 2015. The school has two schedules: the morning section and the afternoon section. There are different levels: Kindergarten, Primary, and Secondary Education. Most of the students belong to a low socioeconomic status.

At the time of the intervention, there were 2916 students, 1215 males and 1701 females at Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School. From those students, 9 were part of the second year of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, where the current study was carried out. The duration of the treatment was 32 hours, and it took place during May and June.



## **4.2. Participants**

A convenience group of 9 International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme students participated in the study. All students belonged to the second year of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, ranging from 17 to 18 years old.

The class was made up of 7 female students and 2 male students, who started classes at 7:00 a.m. and finished at 1:15 p.m. About English ab initio classes, the number of hours of teaching was five per week. Each class session lasted forty minutes. The material used by students was constructed by the teacher based on the syllabus provided by the IBDP.

## **4.3. Parents' and Students' Consent**

Permission from students as well as from their parents to collect data was obtained through an informed consent form (Appendix A) before the intervention. The informed consent contained information related to the research objectives, the students' role during the investigation, and how the data would be collected. It also informed that students could withdraw from the study at any time they wanted and that they would not face any negative repercussions in their grades. The consent forms were written in their native language so that parents and students could have a fully understanding of the investigation. The consent forms were finally signed by all the students in the class as well as by their parents as a proof of acceptance.

The ethical principle that was part of this research was the respect for the participants' autonomy and privacy. The researcher guaranteed the participants' confidentiality and they had the right to remain anonymous.





#### **4.4. Consent from the School**

Permission from the authorities of the school was also requested through a letter (Appendix B) to carry out the study. Therefore, the permission was granted (Appendix C), and the authorities were informed about the development of the research.

#### **4.5. Research Design**

This research was an exploratory case study since it focused on a detailed and deep analysis of a specific situation with a limited number of participants. For this study, a mixed methods research design was used due to the fact that the data were collected and analyzed in a quantitative and qualitative way. The two data sets were collected with the purpose of answering two research questions. This study aimed at investigating the effect of Project-Based Tasks – constituting the independent variable – on the writing skill development as the dependent variable.

This methodology was selected based on the fact that researches can make use of the methodology that best fits the nature of the investigation (Creswell, 2014). Besides, researchers can benefit from mixed methods designs since the combination of qualitative and quantitative data can provide an integral understanding of the investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2014).

#### **4.6. Procedure**

This section presents the processes that were used to collect information for this research study as well as a detailed description of the phase of intervention. A pre-test was administered with the aim of establishing the students' written production performance before the implementation of Project-Based Tasks. Then a period of 32-hour intervention took place where Project-Based Tasks were implemented to see their effect on students' written production. During the intervention, a journal was written by the teacher where the



students' reactions to writing were documented. After the intervention, a post-test was employed to see the effect of Project-Based Tasks on students' written performance. Finally, interviews were carried out to collect information about the students' perceptions toward writing after the intervention.

#### **4.7. Intervention**

The intervention took place during the 2018-2019 school year in the months of May and June of 2019. Students received 5 sessions of English instruction weekly. Each session lasted forty minutes. Due to holidays and school programs, some classes were missed. In order to complete the 32 hours of intervention, the researcher had to make adjustments to the intervention date.

##### **4.7.1. Project-Based Tasks implementation.**

Regarding the planning process, a project planner (Appendix D) was done based on models presented at MyPBLworks at <https://my.pblworks.org/planner>. The project overview, the learning goals, and the calendar containing all the project steps were incorporated in this organizer. Besides, the lesson plans (Appendix E) were developed based on formats presented at <https://my.pblworks.org/planner>, and also adapted from Artini et al (2018).

With the purpose of carrying out a systematic and efficient implementation of Project-Based Tasks, the ten steps proposed by Alan and Stoller (2005, pp. 12-13) were used. Thus, a sequence of activities was introduced to do a project in which students combined different skills in cooperation with their teacher and classmates. They participated in discussions, observations and deep investigation of the studied topic. They were progressively working on writing tasks using the process writing instruction approach until they came with the final draft. The ten steps were as follows:



*Step 1: Students and instructor agree on a theme for the project.* During the first session, I used a See-Think-Wonder chart to arouse the students' interest toward the unit that had to be studied as part of the English ab Initio Syllabus: *Employment*. Based on their ideas, we came up with a driving question: "What jobs are the best options for high school students on vacation." Thus, "Available jobs for high school students during vacation" was the topic for the project.

*Step 2: Students and instructor determine the final outcome.* On the second and third sessions, it was decided to write an essay as a final product of their project. An argumentative essay was selected since this was the text type they had not learned yet. Students started working in groups to give a name to their project as well as to set the objectives for the project.

*Step 3: Students and instructor structure the project.* With the purpose of helping students structure their projects, some questions were given. They were as follows. What information do you need to complete the project successfully? Where can you find this information? How can you get this information? How are we going to analyze this information? When students answered the questions, they started writing and sequencing the activities that were needed to complete the project. Once the students were given the deadline for the final product, they elaborated a timeline. Besides, they made important decisions related to their roles and responsibilities during the project. Five sessions were needed for this step.

*Step 4: Instructor prepares students for the demands of information gathering.* This is the step where students participated in sessions in order to construct their data collection instruments. Due to the fact that students decided to use interviews to collect information, they had sessions to write their questions. They were also provided with some recommendations and strategies to conduct research. Students also received language instruction. Five sessions were used for this step.



*Step 5: Students gather information.* Interviews were conducted to collect information.

This step was carried out outside the classroom.

*Step 6: Instructor prepares students to compile and analyze data.* During two sessions, the students and the teacher discussed about the ways in which they could analyze the data they collected. Besides, some conversation strategies were given to prepare them for the language skills necessary to participate in discussions.

*Step 7: Students compile and analyze information.* Six sessions were dedicated to group work. Students organized, compared, and analyzed the information they considered relevant. The teacher monitored their work helping them when necessary.

*Step 8. Instructor prepares students for the language demands of the final activity.* In this step, students received instruction on how to write argumentative essays through the process approach to writing. To do so, I used a book titled *Writers at Work: The Essay* because it uses the process approach to write different types of essays, and it focuses on the five stages emphasized by Tessema (2005) that encompasses *idea generation, freewriting, drafting, editing, and final draft* production. As a result, students were involved in brainstorming activities, planning and writing tasks, revising and editing sessions, and the production of the final draft. Students worked individually, in pairs, and in groups during the writing instruction.

As a starting point, some ideas about argumentative essays were brainstormed to make it clear that students understand what these types of essay focus on. Then some ideas were given by the students about the importance of the selection of the topic for projects. In that way, students started the process of *idea generation*.

In order to prepare students to write their first draft, the structure of the essay was introduced. Thesis statements, topic sentences, main and supporting ideas were also reviewed.

Table 3

*Argumentative Essay Outline* (Zemach & Stafford, 2008, p. 102)

---

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Hook  
Background  
Thesis statement

---

**II. FIRST MAIN IDEA**

Support 1  
Support 2  
Support 3

**III. SECOND MAIN IDEA**

Support 1  
Support 2  
Support 3

**IV. THIRD MAIN IDEA**

Support 1  
Support 2  
Support 3

---

**V. CONCLUSION**

---

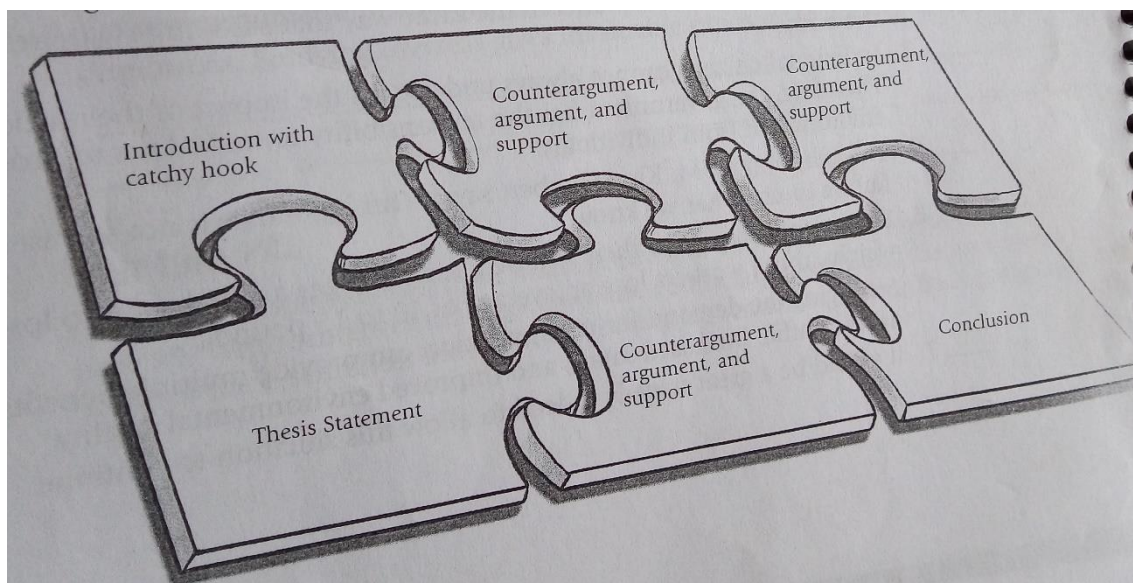


Figure 1. Argumentative essay structure (Zemach & Stafford, 2008, p. 102)

With the purpose of planning the introduction, students practiced writing different hooks, and they shared them with a partner. Their partners had to select the one that they considered the most interesting. Some *freewriting* was allowed during this activity.

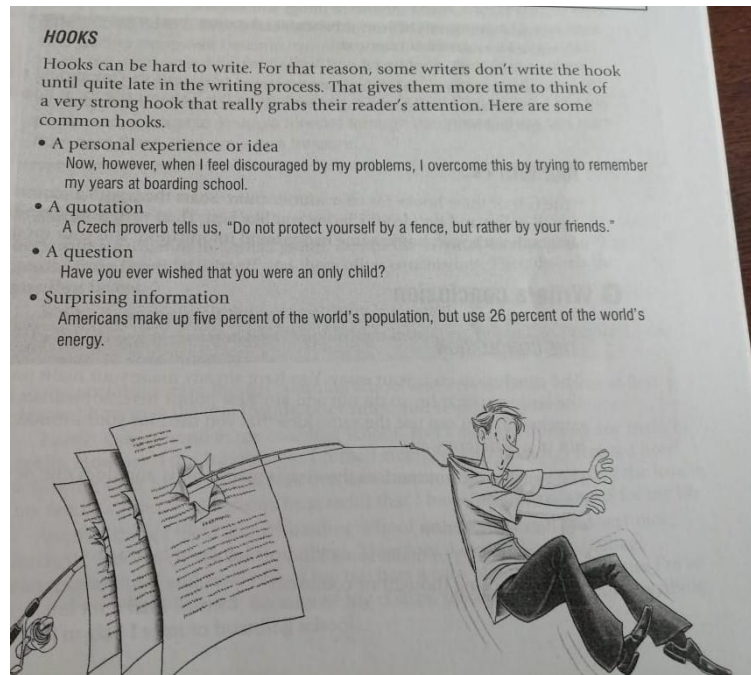


Figure 2. Types of hooks (Zemach & Stafford, 2008, p. 29)

Then, once the characteristics of thesis statements have been reminded, students worked in pairs to identify which sentences were effective thesis statements and what the elements that made them effective were. Besides, they had to recognize which sentences were not effective thesis statements and explain why. Their ideas were reported back to the class. For homework, they were asked to write a thesis statement for their essays as well as background information for their introduction.

The next phase was to make students identify their strongest arguments, counterarguments, and supporting ideas with the purpose of writing the body of the essay. To do so, it was asked them to write three or four main arguments on separate pieces of paper and put them in *emphatic order*, that is, to order the arguments according to their importance, being the first the less important and the last the most important. After that, the students mixed the pieces of paper and they exchanged them with another student, who had to put the

partners' arguments in emphatic order and explain why. I reminded them that through this activity, they could have another point of view, but that the final decision referring to the order of the arguments was entirely theirs.

In order to identify counterarguments, students were given a topic and they had to identify and classify arguments and counterarguments. After that, they were asked to write a double list containing their arguments and counterarguments. Finally, for homework, they were expected to write down their topic and four arguments taken from the research they conducted. Each argument was on a different piece of paper. The next class, they gave the four pieces of paper to four different classmates, and these classmates had to write a counterargument to each argument. After they collected their pieces of paper back, they wrote a list of their arguments and counterarguments, and they also added their own ideas.

As a next step, argumentative language was introduced and practiced. Besides, it was explained that writers usually show the counterargument first and then the argument.

Counterargument	Argument
Some people believe . . .	However, it must also be recognized that . . .
While it is true that . . . ,	it can also be argued that . . .
Although many people claim that . . . ,	one can also argue that . . .

Figure 3. Language for introducing counterarguments and arguments

Based on the list of arguments and counterarguments they wrote centered on the research they conducted and polished by their classmates' ideas, they had to use the argumentative language to introduce the counterargument and the argument. I reminded them that the sentences resulting here could be used as topic sentences in their body paragraphs. Students worked in groups to do this activity.

Once each group had the counterarguments and arguments, they needed to focus on supporting ideas to write their argumentative essay. With the purpose of making students





familiar with different kind of support that ranged from personal experiences to facts and statistics, they were requested to identify the kind of support given in some examples.

Besides, they practiced by putting some supporting ideas in the correct place in a sample essay. Finally, students worked in the same groups they conducted the research and they wrote supporting ideas for their arguments.

When students finished writing the body paragraphs, they had to write a conclusion with a “powerful concluding statement” that could be “an interesting quotation, a question, a call to action,” (Zemach & Stafford, 2008. p. 106) among other ideas. After discussing some examples of concluding statements that students had to locate at the end of given conclusions, they were requested to write two or three concluding statements for their essays and select the one they like the most.

When students finished writing their essays, they exchanged them with the other group with the purpose of giving and receiving feedback. In order to give feedback to their classmates, they were asked to fill in a *Peer Feedback Form* (Appendix F). This feedback was carried out individually.

Once they received feedback from their partners, they made revisions and wrote a second draft. They also received feedback from the teacher. During the process of editing, students were provided with modal alternatives to improve their essays.

Furthermore, peer editing took place during the process of writing. Students exchanged their essays and their classmates looked for errors, circle them, and put a question mark next to it.

Before coming with the final draft, students did a lot of practice to get familiar with the organizational patterns related to argumentative essays. In order to start writing their first drafts, *idea generation* and *freewriting* took place. While the process of *drafting* was carried





out; grammar, mechanics, and organization skills were introduced and practiced. Feedback from their classmates were also received with the purpose of *editing* and improving their essays.

*Step 9: Students present the final product.* Students had to write the final draft. The audience of the final draft was the group of students from the first year of IBDP. The essays were posted in the bulletin board in this class. 10 sessions were used for steps 8 and 9.

*Step 10. Students evaluate the project.* The students used a power point presentation to describe how they developed the project. At the end of the presentations, they were asked about what they had learned during the project. This was done on the last session of the intervention.

#### **4.8. Data Collection Instruments**

The data collection method was based on a mixed-methods design. Therefore, this section will detail the data collection instruments used to obtain the quantitative and qualitative data and how they were analyzed.

##### **4.8.1. Quantitative data collection instrument.**

In order to collect quantitative information about the written production performance that students had before the intervention, an IBDP pre-test was administered at the beginning of the study. The instrument used to collect this data was an argumentative essay, which was adapted from External Assessment Paper 2 of the International Baccalaureate Organization (2013). The instrument was based on one of the topics prescribed in the English Ab Initio Syllabus: *Employment*. The length of the essay was established considering the minimum number of words required in section B of External Productive Assessment. In this case, the minimum requested was 100 words (See Appendix G).



After the intervention, an IBDP post-test was given with the aim of comparing the students' English writing skills performance before and after implementing Project-Based Tasks in their English ab initio classes. This post-test was exactly the same as the pre-test, and the same IBDP criteria were used to evaluate it.

These instruments were not piloted since they followed the criteria used in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

The following three IBDP external assessment criteria for Productive Skills-Section B: Language, Message, and Format were used as a rubric to measure the students' written production in the pre-test and post-test. These IBDP tests were worth 18 points. The Language Criterion was worth 8 points. It measured the ability to communicate effectively through the use of accurate grammar structures and the selection of varied vocabulary. The second criterion: Message was over 8 points. It focused on three main elements. Ideas development, logical structure of the text type, and the use of cohesive devices. The last criterion was out of 2 points. It assessed the use of the appropriate format depending on the text type required (See Appendix H).

Referring the data processing and analysis, the results from the pre-test and the post-test were put on a spreadsheet. Then they were examined using descriptive statistical analysis, where an analysis of measures of central tendency, relative frequencies, and inferential statistical analysis were carried out. For the inferential statistical analysis, a Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was employed with the purpose of examining whether or not there was a significant effect on students' writing production after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks. According to Woolson (2008), this test is the appropriate one when the population constitutes a limited number of participants. SPSS 24 was the software used for data analysis.



#### **4.8.2. Qualitative data collection instruments.**

Regarding the qualitative data, a journal and interviews were the instruments used in order to identify the students' perceptions toward writing. The journal was written during the intervention while the interviews were conducted after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks.

##### ***4.8.2.1. Journal.***

A journal was written by the teacher with the purpose of collecting information about the students' perceptions toward writing during the implementation of Project-Based Tasks (Appendix I). A journal was used because, according to Gass and Mackey (2012), it provides with a great deal of insights and impressions learners can have during learning processes. Besides, when writing a journal there is no time restriction or limit to complete it so that the researcher can write it according to their own schedules.

At the end of each class, the journal was written to record the students' perceptions, behavior, reactions, and attitudes toward writing as well as their language development during the intervention. It included details that were not verbally expressed, but were observed by the researcher during the study. The information from the journal helped the researcher draw conclusions at the end of the study. The teacher's journal was adapted from Kemmis (2009).

##### ***4.8.2.2. Interviews.***

Personal interviews were conducted at the end of the study with the objective of collecting information about the students' perceptions toward writing after implementing Project-Based Tasks (Appendix J). It was decided to use interviews based on the fact that they can obtain "the most spontaneous reactions" (Kothari, 2004, p. 99) from the interviewees. Besides,



Kothari (2004) states that the language of the interview can be adapted depending on the interviewee so that misunderstandings could be avoided.

This interview was conducted in the form of direct personal investigation since the researcher collected “the information personally from the sources concerned” (Kothari, 2004, p. 97). In other words, the researcher was the person who was in charge of conducting the interviews.

Before carrying out the interviews, the participants were informed of the purpose of the interviews. It was also reminded that the principle of ethics was part of this investigation since the information collected would be handled confidentially.

The interviews were adapted from Artini et al (2018). A total of 8 open-ended questions were asked and additional questions were requested when it was needed. Besides, some questions were omitted or restructured so that the interview could flow smoothly.

The interviews were piloted in the Third Year of Baccalaureate, class A of Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School since this class had the same characteristics as the studied group. After piloting the interviews, some changes were done so that the questions to be asked were clear. Piloting interviews was relevant since it also helped the researcher have a validated instrument.

The interviews were conducted in Spanish and they were recorded and transcribed in order to look for common patterns and repeated information about the students’ perceptions. Before the analysis, they were translated into English.

Main topics that reoccurred from the information taken from the interviews and journal were analyzed and used to deepen the understanding about the students’ perceptions toward writing. The information was entered in a spreadsheet, and descriptive statistical analysis of relative frequencies was used. SPSS was the software employed for data analysis.



Finally, the results of quantitative and qualitative data were compared to establish a connection between them. This analysis let us to find the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable of this research study.

As it can be seen, this chapter provides information about the research design of the current study, where information about the methodology, intervention phase, context, participants, and instruments used to collect the data have been described in detail, giving an overall view of how this case study has been conducted.



## Chapter 5

### Results

This chapter contains the results of the quantitative and qualitative data that have been cross-referenced to show the results that are reliable. A descriptive and inferential statistical analysis of the data collected using qualitative and quantitative methods was carried out. The descriptive statistics analyzed the frequency and the main measures of central tendency. (Gorgas, Cardiel, & Zamorano, 2011). Additionally, the pre-test and the post-test were analyzed through the inferential statistical analysis to see if there was a change on the written production criteria (message, language, and format) caused by the impact of the intervention. SPSS 24 was the statistics program employed for analyzing the quantitative and qualitative data. In order to illustrate the results in a visual manner, tables and graphics were used. The editing of the tables and graphics was done by means of Excel 365. Additionally, quotes from students were presented for better understanding of the qualitative data.

It is crucial to mention that the general objective of this study was to analyze the effects of Project-Based Tasks on the written production of the students of the second year of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School as well as their perceptions toward writing. The results of the pre-test and the post-test were used to prove whether the implementation of the approach was effective or not. Additionally, the information from the teacher's journal and the students' interviews was used to analyze the students' perceptions toward writing. Through the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative results, the main objective of this study was fulfilled.



## 5.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data were gathered to address the first specific objective which was to determine the IBDP students' written production level before and after the application of Project-Based Tasks through an IBDP test. Thus, the pre-test was administered to the group before the intervention and the post-test was applied to them after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks. It is important to keep in mind that the pre-test constitutes baseline data since it functions as the foundation of the research project and is utilized in comparison with other data obtained after the intervention, namely post-test (Moscoso & Calle, 2011). The *Wilcoxon Test* was employed due to the fact that the results from the pre-test and the post-test constitute reduced data, which means that the sample was small, related, and dependent. Also, through this test, the difference between before and after the intervention can be observed and analyzed (Berlanga & Rubio, 2012).

According to Berlanga and Rubio (2012), the hypotheses in the *Wilcoxon Test* are:

Null Hypothesis

$$H_0: \eta = \eta_0$$

The population median ( $\eta$ ) is equal to the hypothetical median ( $\eta_0$ ).

Alternative hypothesis

$$H_1: \eta \neq \eta_0$$

The population median ( $\eta$ ) differs from the hypothetical median ( $\eta_0$ ).

$$H_1: \eta > \eta_0$$

The population median ( $\eta$ ) is greater than the hypothetical median ( $\eta_0$ ).

$$H_1: \eta \neq \eta_0$$

The population median ( $\eta$ ) differs from the hypothetical median ( $\eta_0$ ).

$$H_1: \eta < \eta_0$$

The population median ( $\eta$ ) is lower than the hypothetical median ( $\eta_0$ ).

### Results:

Con  $p < 0.05$   $H_0$  is rejected

Con  $p > 0.05$   $H_0$  is not rejected

#### 5.1.1. Pre-test and post-test results.

The results from the pre-test and the post-test were organized into three criteria: message, language, and format. The results from the pre-test are presented first, followed by a comparison between the pre-test and the post-test results, and in that way the first specific objective that was already mentioned was addressed.

In regard to the language criterion in the pre-test, students had an average level in which written communication was partially effective. The range of vocabulary was sometimes varied, and most basic grammatical structures were used accurately. The register was partially appropriate. Students presented quite frequent punctuation or spelling errors, and occasionally a re-reading was necessary for a complete understanding (4.00).

The level indicated above regarding the use of language in written production was the minimum level reached by the group before the intervention of the teacher, and at least 50% of students were within this level (4.00). Additionally, there were students who reached a higher level (5), whose response was generally accurate, and communication was generally effective. All this information is displayed in the chart below.



Table 4  
*Overall Pre-Test Results*

<b>Writing Skills – Pre-test</b>				
<i>Sample Statistic</i>	<i>Message</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Total</i>
Mean	2.89	4.00	.44	7.33
Median	3.00	4.00	0.00	7.00
Std. Deviation	.601	.866	.527	1.732
Range	2	2	1	5
Minimum	2	3	0	5
Maximum	4	5	1	10

Regarding the message criterion in the pre-test, results showed that the students had a level (2.89) in which the tasks had been fulfilled in general. One or more ideas had been identified and developed. In addition, there was evidence of logical written structure, generally with simple cohesive devices. At least 50% of students were at this level (3).

The maximum level (4) reached in the message criterion had the same characteristics as the average level of this criterion. Furthermore, there were students with the minimum level (2) who had partially accomplished the task.

Finally, the average level of the group as well as the level of 50% of students did not present an adequate format in the production of writing (0.44). It is apparent that the main ideas about the type of text, the introduction, the supporting ideas, and the conclusions were not clear. It can be concluded that format, according to the baseline data, was one of the biggest challenges when writing. It should be mentioned that at least one student did present a better level in this criterion (1), which was the maximum obtained, meaning that the format was partially appropriate.

As can be seen in table 4, the overall average score of the group in the pre-test was 7.33 out of the 18. In a descriptive way, this means that the level of performance of the group before the intervention was 41%. Furthermore, it is important to mention that 50% of students

got at least 7 over 18, which is equivalent to 38 %. The minimum grade was 5 (28%) while the maximum one was 10 (56%).

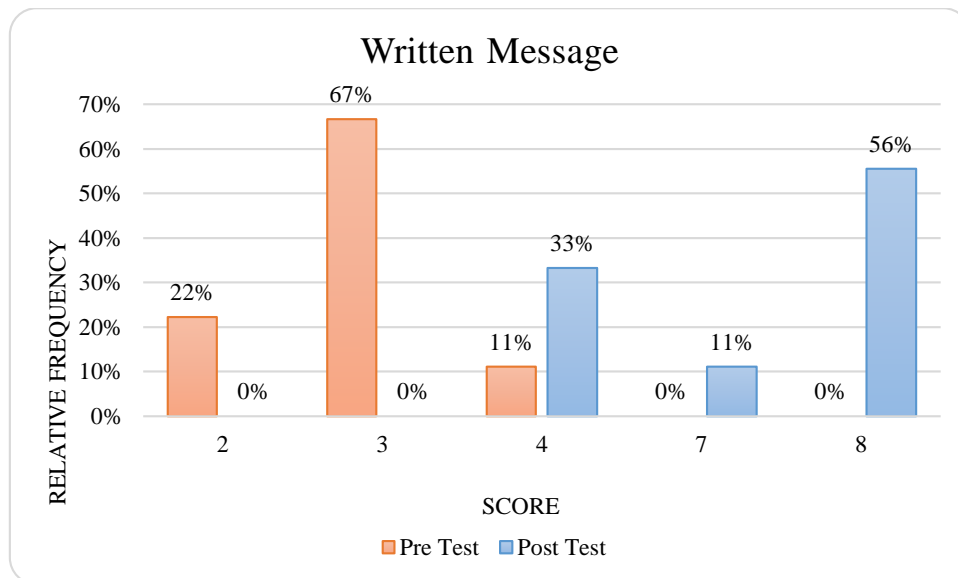


Figure 4. Pre-test and post-test written message task fulfillment criterion results

A first approach to the effects of the implementation of Project-Based Tasks on the message criterion can be done at this stage. As can be noticed in the previous image, the results of the pre-test show that 89% of students have fulfilled the task in a general and partial way. From this percentage, the majority of the students, 67%, obtained 3 out of 8. However, 11% of students achieved 50 % of the desired performance, being a 4 over 8.

After the intervention, it can be seen how the students' performance was grouped at over 50% of the score. The maximum score obtained in the pre-test constituted then the minimum score obtained in the post-test (4). This score was obtained by 33% of students. The majority of the participants, 56%, obtained the highest score (8). This shows that in the message criterion, 67% of students had fulfilled the task effectively (7-8).

Table 5  
*Pre-Test and Post-Test Written Language Task Fulfillment Criterion Results*

Language Score	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Relative Frequency	Cumulative Frequency
3	33%	33%	0%	0%
4	33%	67%	22%	22%
5	33%	100%	0%	22%
6	0%	100%	22%	44%
7	0%	100%	56%	100%

Table 5 displays the impact of the implementation of Project-Based Tasks on the written language criterion. It is observed that in the pre-test, students had scores between 3 and 5 over 8 points, that was between 38% and 63%, proportionally distributed in the three scores (33%). However, in the post-test, the range of the scores had changed. Scores were between 4 and 7, that was 50% and 80%, respectively. Thus, the majority of the students (56%) reached 80% of the desired performance after the intervention, which means that the language criterion had been used accurately, resulting in effective communication.

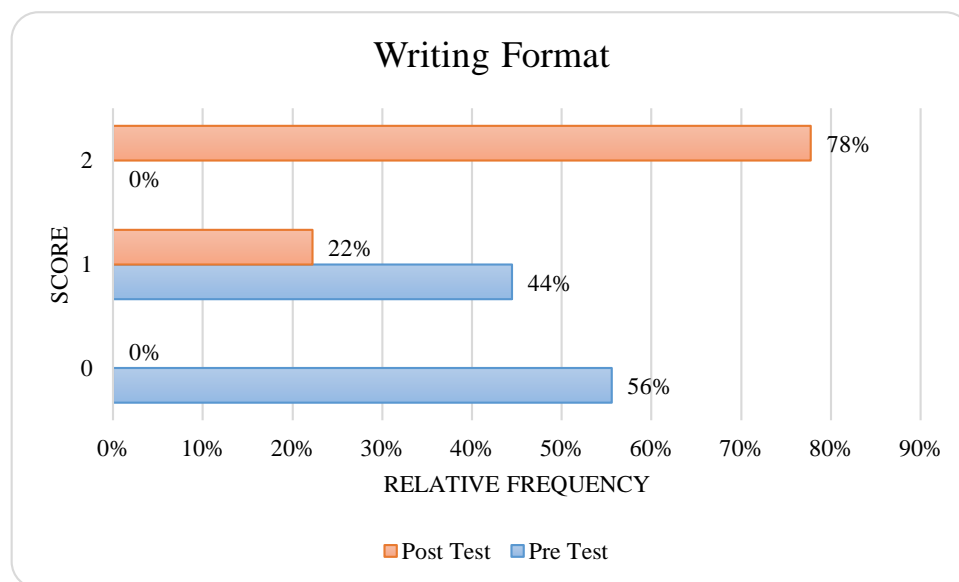


Figure 5. Pre-test and post-test writing format results

The preceding figure shows that the use of the correct format in writing prior to the intervention was zero for most students (56%), and only 44 % of students reached a level in

which the format was partially adequate (1). On the other hand, after the intervention, positive changes in the students' scores could be seen. Thus, the majority of students (78%) used the appropriate format, and 22% reached a performance of at least 50 % in this criterion after the intervention.

Table 6  
*Pre-Test and Post-Test Overall Score Analysis*

<b>Total Score</b>	<b>Pre-test</b>		<b>Post-test</b>	
	<i>Relative Frequency</i>	<i>Cumulative Frequency</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>	<i>Cumulative Frequency</i>
5	11%	11%	0%	0%
6	33%	44%	0%	0%
7	11%	56%	0%	0%
8	11%	67%	0%	0%
9	22%	89%	22%	22%
10	11%	100%	0%	22%
12	0%	100%	11%	33%
16	0%	100%	22%	56%
17	0%	100%	44%	100%

Finally, table 6 illustrates that the students' overall score went from 5 to 10 over 18 points in the pre-test, which represented 28% and 56 %, respectively. Most students (33%) got 6 in the overall score which was equivalent to 33%. However, in the post-test, the overall scores had increased, fluctuating between 9 and 17 points out of 18 points which was the maximum grade students could get in written production. The grades students got after the intervention went from 50% to 94%. Furthermore, after the intervention, the results presented in the above table show that the majority of the students (44 %) had obtained a high score of 17 in written production.

Based on the results presented in this section, it can be concluded that the implementation of project based-tasks has led to positive changes in the written production performance of the group, as revealed by the mathematical differences of absolute and relative frequencies of each criterion as well as by the overall score.

### 5.1.2. Pre-test and post-test comparison.

Now that the IBDP students' written production level before and after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks has been determined, it is time to compare the pre-test and the post-test results to see if there is statistical difference so that the change generated can be proven to be significant.

#### Message criterion

Table 7  
*Pre-test and Post-test Message Criterion Results*

<b>Message Statistical</b>	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
Mean	3	7
Median	3	8
Mode	3	8

The data displayed in the chart above show the pre-test and the post-test results obtained in the message criterion that was graded out of 8. It can be observed that the post-test results presented a negatively skewed distribution, which means that the majority of students got a score above the mean reported.

After the teacher's intervention, the average score in this criterion went from 3 (general fulfillment of the task) in the pre-test to 7 (effective fulfillment of the task) in the post-test. As seen in the above chart, the majority of students obtained 8 out of 8, and 50% of students reached scores above 8 or at least 8 in this criterion. This is important since it indicates that the majority of students improved as result of the intervention.

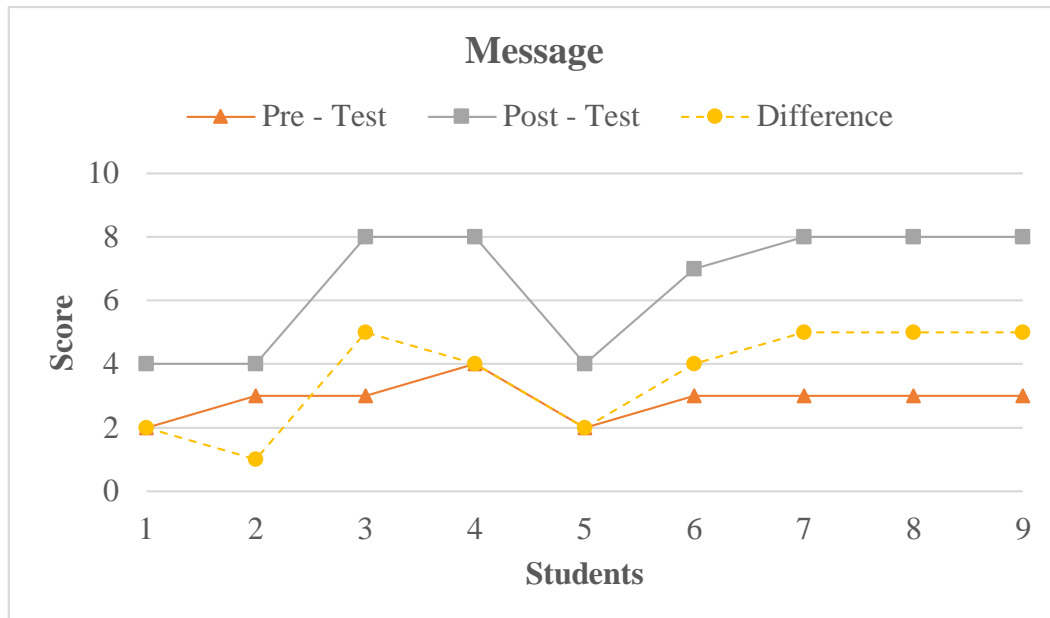


Figure 6. Difference between the pre-test and the post-test based on the message criterion

Figure 6 displays that there was an increase in all students' scores in the message criterion after the intervention. Thus, there was an increase of 126 % in the average score of the group. There were students who almost tripled their performance (167 %). This means that the average score in the message criterion had an increase of 3.6 points. Also, it is important to mention that there were students who had an increase of 5 points in this criterion.

### Language Criterion

Table 8

*Pre-Test and Post-Test Language Criterion Results*

Language Statistical	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean	4	6
Median	4	7
Mode	3	7

Regarding the language criterion that was graded over 8 points, it is observed that it presents a negatively skewed distribution in the scores after the intervention. In other words, the majority of students obtained a score above the mean reported (6).

The mean scores went from 4 in the pre-test to 6 in the post-test. This means that the students went from communication that was partially effective to effective communication.

As seen above, the majority of the students got 7 out of 8, and 50 % of students obtained at least 7 over 8 in this criterion.

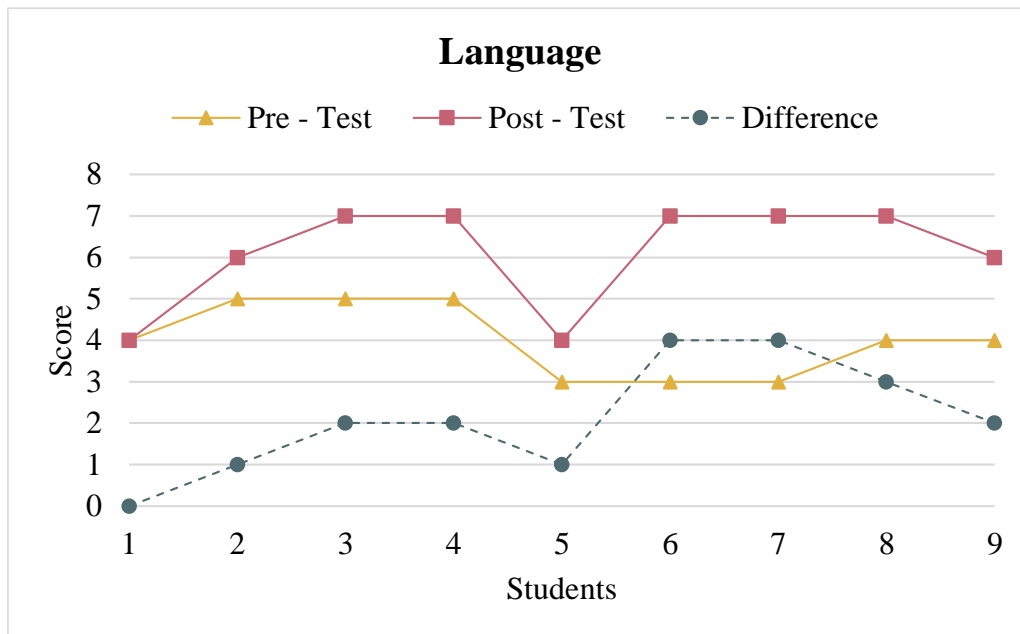


Figure 7. Difference between the pre-test and post-test based on the language criterion

Positive changes are shown in figure 7, where it can be observed that the majority of students presented an increase in their scores in the language criterion after the intervention.

Even though one student did not increase his/her score, the average score of the group had an increase of 58 %. There were some students who had an increase of 133 % in their grades. In general, there was an increase of 2.1 points in the language criterion score, and it is important to mention that there were students who increased up to 4 points.

## Format criterion

Finally, the results from the descriptive analysis of the scores obtained in the format criterion that was over 2, presented the following variations:

Table 9

*Pre-Test and Post-Test Format Criterion Results*

<b>Format Statistical</b>	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
Mean	0	2
Median	0	2
Mode	0	2

Results reveal that students went from not using the appropriate format (0) to using the correct one (2) after the intervention. The majority of students obtained at least 2 out of 2 after the intervention.

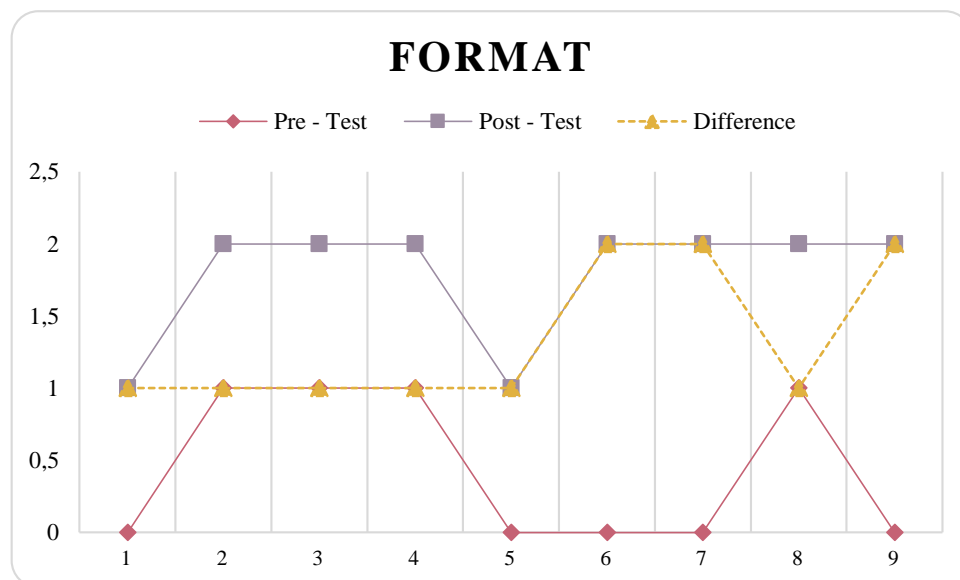


Figure 8. Difference between the pre-test and post-test in format criterion

Figure 8 shows that all students had increased their grades in this criterion after the intervention. The average score in this criterion had increased 100%. On average, students increased 1.3 points in their grade. There were students who increased up to 2 points.



### 5.1.2.1. Rank analysis.

Table 10

*Pre-test and Post-test Rank Analysis*

<i>Rank Statistics</i>	<i>Pre-test</i>				<i>Post-test</i>			
	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Frequency Relative</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Frequency Relative</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Frequency Relative</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Frequency Relative</i>
<i>Message</i>	4	11%	2	22%	8	56%	4	33%
<i>Language</i>	5	33%	3	33%	7	56%	4	22%
<i>Format</i>	1	44%	0	56%	2	78%	1	22%
<i>Total Score</i>	10	11%	5	11%	17	44%	9	22%

The previous chart shows that there has been increase in the minimum rank of all three criteria after the intervention; however, the greatest increase can be observed in the overall score. The lowest overall score increased 4 points while the highest overall score increase went from 1 to 7. The highest overall score is the one that exhibited greater increase in their results after the intervention.

Table 11

*Pre-Test and Post-Test Overall Score Analysis*

<b>Total Score</b> <i>Pre-test</i>		<b>Total Score</b> <i>Post-test</i>	
Mean	7	Mean	14
Median	7	Median	16
Std. Deviation	2	Std. Deviation	3
Range	5	Range	8
Minimum	5	Minimum	9
Maximum	10	Maximum	17

After the implementation of Project-Based Tasks, students obtained an average final score of 14 out of 18, which was 7 points higher than the one obtained in the pre-test. This represents an improvement of 100% in their final score. 50 % of students got a score above 16 points, which means that there has been an increase of 9 points. This represents 129 % of improvement in their final score compared to the one before the intervention. The rank is

extended since the standard deviation is greater than the one reported in the pre-test.

However, the minimum score recorded in the group improved by 80 % and the maximum score improved by 70 %. All this information is displayed in table 12.

Finally, in order to triangulate the conclusion that the students presented an improvement in their written production after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks, a hypothesis test is applied through a paired-sample Wilcoxon signed-rank test to see if there was a difference before and after the intervention by comparing the two medians of the population. This test is used since the sample size was less than 30 students. The SPSS software was used to analyze the ranks as follows:

- Negative ranks: these are ranks for which the pre-test scores were greater than the post-test scores.
- Positive ranks: these are ranks for which the pre-test scores were lower than the post-test scores.
- Tied ranks: the times that the pre-test and the post-test values were equal.

Table 12  
*Rank Analysis*

		<b>Ranks</b>		
		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>Sum of Ranks</i>
Message post - test - Message pre - test	Negative Ranks	0 <sup>a</sup>	0.00	0.00
	Positive Ranks	9 <sup>b</sup>	5.00	45.00
	Ties	0 <sup>c</sup>		
	Total	9		
Language post - test - Language pre - test	Negative Ranks	0 <sup>d</sup>	0.00	0.00
	Positive Ranks	8 <sup>e</sup>	4.50	36.00
	Ties	1 <sup>f</sup>		
	Total	9		
Format post - test - Format pre - test	Negative Ranks	0 <sup>g</sup>	0.00	0.00
	Positive Ranks	9 <sup>h</sup>	5.00	45.00
	Ties	0 <sup>i</sup>		
	Total	9		
Total post - test - Total pre - test	Negative Ranks	0 <sup>j</sup>	0.00	0.00
	Positive Ranks	9 <sup>k</sup>	5.00	45.00
	Ties	0 <sup>l</sup>		
	Total	9		

Table 13

*Comparative Analysis through the Wilcoxon Test*

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>				
	<i>Message post - test - Message pre - test</i>	<i>Language post - test - Language pre - test</i>	<i>Format post - test - Format pre - test</i>	<i>Total post - test - Total pre - test</i>
Z	-2.694 <sup>b</sup>	-2.539 <sup>b</sup>	-2.762 <sup>b</sup>	-2.670 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.011	.006	.008

The comparison of the data between the pre-test and the post-test indicated significant positive differences with reference to the writing overall score as well as to each of the three assessed criteria (message, language, and format).

Thus, after the intervention, results showed that  $H_0$  is rejected for paired samples of the three criteria and for the writing overall score. It can be concluded that there was a significant difference in the overall score median as well as in the medians of the scores obtained in the three criteria with an error of 0.007, 0.011, 0.006, 0.008, respectively. In conclusion, written production represented a considerable improvement after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks ( $sig < 0,05$ ).

Regarding message, the difference was of 5 points since the median score of at least 50% of the students in the pre-test was 3 and in the post-test was 8. Following that, the language criterion displayed improvement as well. 50 % of the students obtained a median score of 4 in the pre-test while obtaining 7 in the post-test, resulting in a difference of 3 points. Finally, the format criterion also exhibited an important improvement. The difference was of 2 points, comparing the median score in the pre-test (0) with the one obtained after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks (2). This demonstrates that the improvement in all three criteria was statistically significant, reaffirming the positive impact of the application of Project-Based Tasks to improve written production.



Referring to the overall score, it is fundamental to mention that there was a difference of 9 points since the median score of at least 50 % of the students was 7 out of 18 in the pre-test and 16 in the post-test.

After analyzing these results, it can be concluded that the students presented a statistically significant improvement in the written production after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks. This increase is observed in each of all three criteria (message, language, and format) as well as in the students' overall score. This improvement is corroborated by the statistically significant difference of the final score of at least 50% of the students when compared the pre-test and the post-test results, a difference that is caused by an improvement in the performance of all written production criteria evaluated: message, language, and format.

## **5.2. Qualitative Data Analysis**

This section is dedicated to discussing the insights gathered from the qualitative data that have been collected in order to meet the second specific objective which was to explore students' perceptions toward writing after the use of Project-Based Tasks in their English classes. To do so, entries from a research journal written by the teacher during the intervention will be analyzed first, followed by the analysis of the interviews conducted with the students at the end of the study. It is important to mention that the qualitative data that focus on a deeper understanding of the students' perceptions toward writing assisted in validating the quantitative ones, results from a socio-psychological perspective. As it was previously mentioned, descriptive statistical analysis of relative frequencies was used for data analysis.



### **5.2.1. Journal.**

The aim of the journal was to record the attitudes and reactions the students showed toward writing. It was written after each class during the whole phase of intervention by the teacher. The teacher's journal recorded information about the four stages of the project. It was decided to divide the project into the four stages proposed by Kriwas (1999), as cited in Fragoulis (2009), with the purpose of recording the information in an easier and more accurate way. Stage 1, Speculation, encompassed steps 1 and 2 of the project. Stage 2, Structure of the project activities involved steps 3 and 4. Stage 3, Project execution included steps 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. Stage 4, Evaluation comprised step 10.

#### ***5.2.1.1. Speculation.***

During this stage that was devoted to boosting students' interest in the project, most students (7) were very engaged and showed enthusiasm with the opening activities. Due to the fact that students were accustomed to working in pairs and groups, they started to participate. However, 2 students struggled with the activity. They looked worried and timid.

#### ***5.2.1.2. Design of the project activities.***

At this stage, the formation of groups as well as the organization of the project took place. Even though most students were eager to start with the project, some problems emerged. All of them began to use L1 to organize the project activities although they were asked to do it in English. They struggled a lot at the beginning. It is essential to mention that they usually use L2 to do different learning activities, but it was noticed that they had problems with using it for group organization. Then some useful vocabulary was reviewed so that they could interact in groups. But it has to be admitted that this activity took a lot of time and effort until they started participating using L2. After detecting that two students from the same group were reluctant to participate, one of them was changed to the other group.



### **5.2.1.3. Project execution.**

During this stage, students gathered information, analyzed it, and received writing instruction with the purpose of writing the final product that was an argumentative essay. It was observed that 3 students did not have problems with interacting or asking questions to do the activities, but the rest of the students struggled to communicate in L2 at the beginning as it had happened in the project organization. Additionally, it was observed that when more confident students spoke, their classmates listened to them carefully and wrote down new words or phrases. Examples of phrases they wrote down were as follows: the point is..., the fact is that..., I consider..., I don't think so...

After some classes, less confident students started to use phrases from more confident ones. Only two students did not participate much. One of those students said “es que ya me quitan las ideas” meaning that his/her ideas had already been said by other students.

During group discussions, it was noticed that the majority of students participated in class and group discussions in a more relaxed way. They were more prepared to share their ideas and looked more confident. When it was needed, students asked for help from their classmates rather from the teacher. Some phrases that students started using after listening to their classmates during discussions were: I must admit that..., In my view..., I totally agree with you..., I would say that..., exactly..., at the end of the day..., etc.

During writing instruction, students worked individually, in pairs, and in groups. The researcher observed that they struggled a lot to write down their ideas. It took them a long time to write their arguments, counterarguments, and hooks. It was seen that students used argumentative language taken from the text models they had access to. Examples of phrases taken from text models that students used in their drafts were: although many people claim that..., while it is true that..., one can also argue that..., however..., it must also be



recognized that..., it is essential..., ought to..., among others. The researcher realized that the students had exchanged copies containing academic language taken from the internet with their classmates, which showed that they were interested in learning new vocabulary appropriate to the exercise.

An activity that they did not feel comfortable with was peer-feedback. They appeared to be anxious, confused, and even a little irritated when they had to exchange their drafts with their classmates to give and receive feedback. They looked really uncomfortable. After the researcher explained about the importance of receiving and giving feedback from their partners, the majority of students said that they did not feel confident to give feedback since it was very demanding and that they considered that they were not well prepared for that yet. After this dialogue, only 3 students appeared to be a little open to this activity. After receiving feedback from their partners, only a few students seemed glad about it.

After some sessions of writing instruction, the majority of students looked confident. They were writing their drafts in more detail and they were discussing their ideas with one another. As a conclusion, it can be said that while students were writing, they look really engaged in the activity even though it did not happen at the beginning. It was observed that students worked collaboratively, and they exchanged a lot of opinions. When they presented their final product, they were really happy and looked excited to post it in another class so that other people could read their essays. Unfortunately, one activity that did not go as it was expected by the researcher was peer-feedback.

#### ***5.2.1.4. Evaluation.***

During the last session, the students used a power point presentation to talk about their projects. They looked relaxed while they were explaining how their project had been conducted. At the end of it, they said that they felt satisfied and proud because they used real



data to write it. They also said that they helped each other a lot. Finally, they started to give some ideas for future projects.

The results from the journal indicate that the students had a positive response to writing and its process. Even though they struggled a lot at the beginning of the writing process, they then appeared to feel more confident and comfortable with the ideas they needed to write, with the organization of the essay, and with grammar and vocabulary. The researcher perceived that the students had gained new vocabulary not only from their material, but from the collaborative work they were doing in class. Students who had better writing skills helped the ones who had problems when writing. Unfortunately, peer feedback did not demonstrate the expected results since students did not enjoy this activity. It caused anxiety and the majority of students were reluctant to do it. A recommendation for future writing instruction would be to work on peer-feedback in more detail and provide more instruction on how to do it effectively.

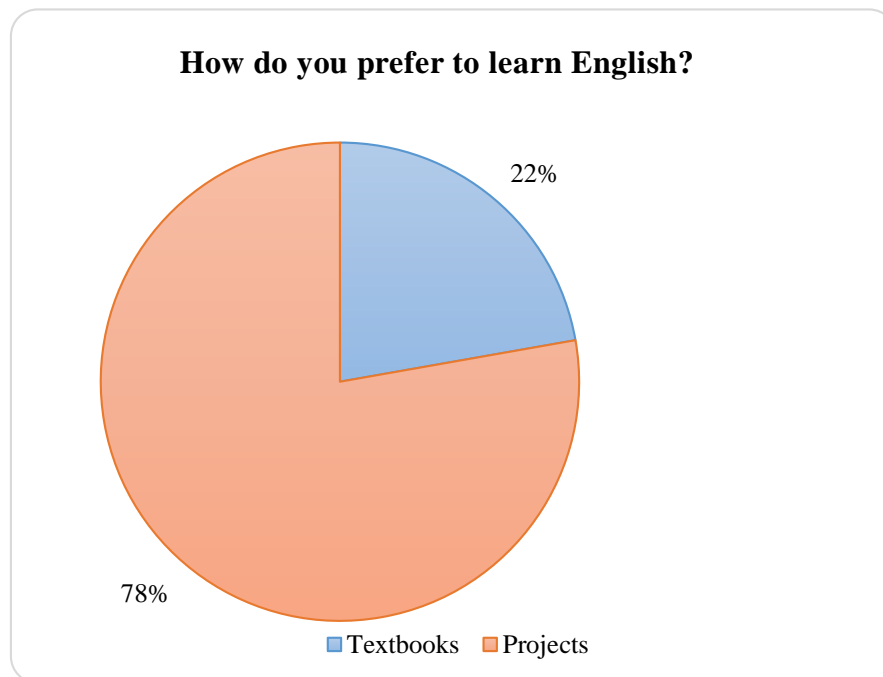
### **5.2.2. Interviews.**

In addition to the teacher's journal, semi-structured interviews were also used to record information about the students' perceptions toward writing. Interviews were carried out at the end of the intervention with each of the 9 students. These interviews were recorded and conducted in L1 (Spanish) with the purpose of getting more accurate information since the students could express themselves more freely by using their first language.

Students were required to answer 8 questions that started by exploring their general ideas about Project-Based Tasks until specific questions about writing. The responses for each question will be discussed one by one, and the use of quotes from students will be included with the purpose of gaining a profound understanding of the results.



The first question asked the students if they preferred to learn English using a text or by doing projects, and they had to explain their answer. As seen in figure 9, results show that 78% of students preferred to learn English by doing projects while 22% of students preferred to do it by following the content of a book.



*Figure 9.* Students' preferences

Students affirmed that they preferred learning English through projects since the group work was interesting, and it allowed them to share experiences and develop different skills in real situations. The participants stated their thoughts as follows: "I prefer projects because we can learn in a different way, it is like more realistic" (Student 2). "Projects, because it is possible to work in groups and we share our experiences..." (Student 3). "It was interesting and entertained to work in that way. The results made us feel we did a good job" (Student 7).

The second question asked was how the students felt while working with Project-Based Tasks. The options were optimistic, pessimistic, good, and bad. They also had to explain why.

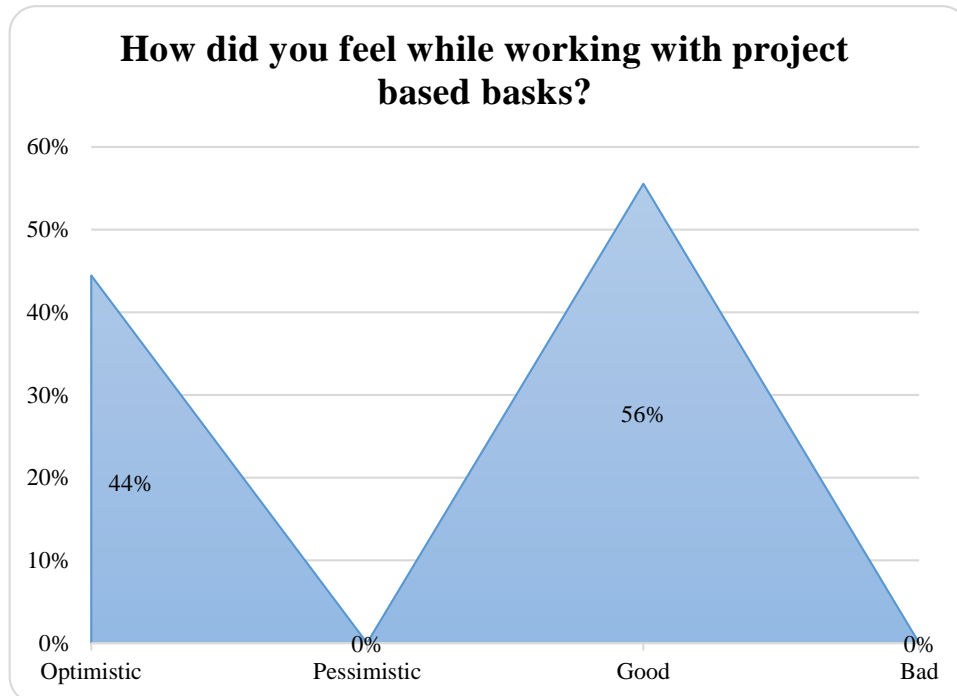


Figure 10. Opinions about Project-Based Tasks

All students showed a positive reaction to Project-Based Tasks. Thus, 44 % of students responded that they felt optimistic while 56 % said that they felt good. Student 1, for example, stated “Good, because it was something new, something that was not very common as it was in other English classes in previous years. It motivated us to think to look for an answer to the given question”. No one reported negative feelings toward Project-Based Tasks.

It can be concluded that Project-Based Tasks generated positive feelings since they are perceived as innovative wherein students can explore new topics in real situations. Students stated that learning is greater due to the interaction with other people while working in teams. It encourages research in another language while creating an environment where knowledge is exchanged. As it was stated by student 9, “The group work helped me a lot to expand my ideas with respect to the studied topic and to exchange knowledge with my classmates. It allowed us to do a better job and we felt good when working as a team.”



The third and fourth questions focused on what the students liked or disliked about Project-Based Tasks and why. The students pointed out that what they liked about the projects was the opportunity to work collaboratively. Low achieving students learned from high achieving ones. Besides, it was mentioned that they had the opportunity to gain vocabulary and to start doing research in English. Student 2, for instance, said “I learned and used new words and phrases to communicate. I learned from the classmates who knew more than me.” Student 7 said “We shared a lot with our classmates as we learned new vocabulary, new ways of thinking as well as their opinions about jobs.”

Regarding the question what the students did not like about Project-Based Tasks, they mentioned that they had difficulty in fulfilling the activities according to the schedule that was established by themselves. Besides, they stated that it was sometimes difficult to adapt to the pace of all the students in the group. Another challenge that students from one group faced was lack of participation from one student in that group. As it was stated by student 6, “there was one student who did not want to work.”

It is important to mention that the student they referred to as the one who did not participate, stated that he did not like to work in groups. This student said “Personally, I don’t like it very much to work in groups. I do it, but I prefer to work by myself. I understand that group work is good for us since we learn to collaborate and share ideas, but I don’t like it very much”. Finally, some students found it difficult to reach consensus in order to present conclusions that reflected the thoughts and feelings of the whole group.

The fifth question asked about the obstacles the students had to face when doing Project-Based Tasks and how they overcame them. One of the obstacles students identified was related to the students’ English level. They said that due to the fact that there were different English levels in their groups, they had to make adaptations so that the project could work

well. The students also mentioned the data gathering and analysis as a challenge that was overcome with more dedication to the project.

The sixth question focused on the skills that were developed through Project-Based Tasks. Keeping in mind that the English language skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing, results showed that 100% of the students perceived that speaking was the skill that was improved through Project-Based Tasks. The skill that was mentioned in second place was writing. 89% of the students mentioned that they improved writing through Project-Based Tasks. 56% of the students perceived listening and reading as the skills that were developed through Project-Based Tasks.

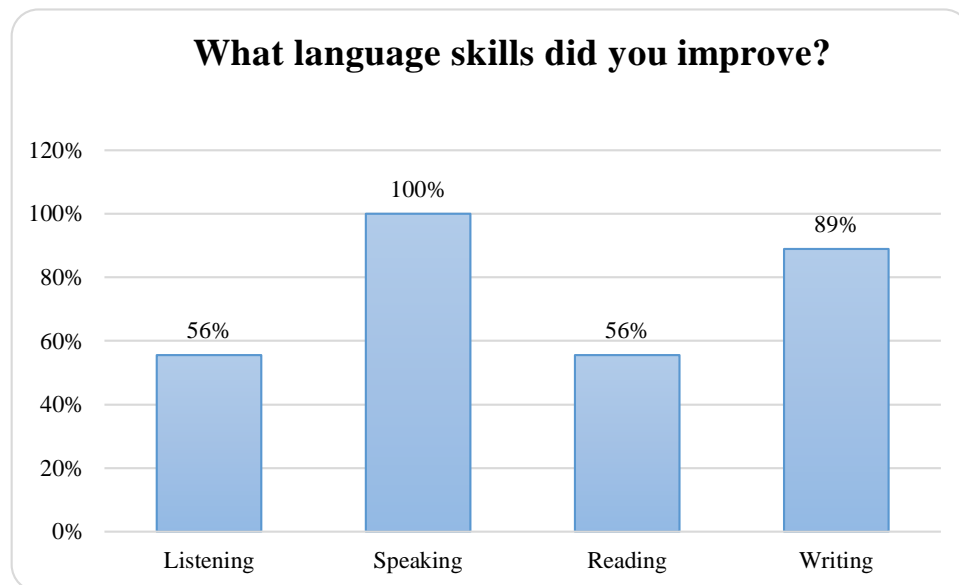


Figure 11. Perceptions on language skills improvement

As a general overview, results indicate that 56 % of the students considered that working with Project-Based Tasks improved the four language skills as a whole. The majority of students perceived that they had improved the four skills due to the interaction they had during working in groups. Student 2, for example, stated “We generally communicated in English and we had to understand our classmates to be able to respond. Besides, we had to read different material and also, we were expected to write an essay, reports, and questions for the interviews. Student 7 said, “In my case, the four skills were improved since I had to



read a lot of essay models in order to write some drafts. Also, it was necessary to use English to share my ideas while working in groups.”

The seventh question asked was about the advantages of using Project-Based Tasks to improve writing. Thus, Box 1 shows that 5 components had emerged from this question. They have been listed from the most frequent to the least below.

Box 1

*Interview, question 7*

Question 7: According to your experience, what are the advantages of using Project-Based Tasks to improve the students’ writing skills?

1. Format improvement
2. The use of real data
3. Message improvement
4. Language (grammar and vocabulary) improvement
5. Collaborative work

The use of a correct format has been mentioned 7 times. Student 1 stated that “since we worked with the essay format, we knew exactly how to write the introduction, the essay body and the conclusion.” Student 2 said “we had access to different essay models and after reading lots of them and after a lot of practice, we learned how to structure an essay.”

The use of real data has been mentioned 6 times. Students perceived that the essay they wrote was meaningful since it was based on real data. Student 7, for example, stated “I felt motivated because the information on the essay was real since it was based on interviews our group conducted to young people.”

Message and language improvement were mentioned 4 times. Regarding message, student 8 pointed out “I learned to read the instructions carefully to be able to transmit the message



clearly, focusing on the people who were going to read it.” Referring to language, students mentioned that vocabulary and grammar structures had been enhanced. “I could increase my vocabulary since I had access to new words and phrases not only from the material, but also from my classmates” (Student 3).

Collaborative work has been mentioned 3 times. Students said that writing collaboratively help them share ideas, be supportive, and learn from each other. For instance, student 6 reported “I think that it is a good idea to write in groups since you can help other classmates, and in that way, you are also learning.”

The information presented above reflects the students’ perceptions about Project-Based Tasks as an approach that could help them improve their writing skills since the format, message, and language were enhanced. Also, the students felt motivated by working with real data that made them see their project as more valuable. Finally, it is evident that students perceived collaborative work as an advantage of Project-Based Tasks to improve writing due to the support they received from each other.

#### Box 2

##### *Interview, question 8*

Question 8: According to your experience, what are the disadvantages of using Project-Based Tasks to improve the students’ writing skills?

1. Lack of peer-feedback instruction (3 students)
2. Lack of vocabulary (1 student)
3. Lack of critical thinking skills (1 student)
4. Extra work (1 student)
5. The topic is too narrow (1 student)
6. Lack of interest in language improvement (1 student)
7. No disadvantages (1 student)



The data displayed in the box above reflects the students' perceptions about the fact that the lack of peer feedback instruction was a disadvantage for improving writing through Project-Based Tasks. They stated that they found it very difficult to give and receive feedback since they were not accustomed to doing it. Also, they mentioned that they felt very worried about not being able to give appropriate feedback.

In addition, lack of vocabulary was mentioned by one student who stated that it was hard for him/her put his/her thoughts into words without the necessary vocabulary. Lack of critical thinking skills was also mentioned by another student. He stated that "one disadvantage was lack of critical ideas to be able to do the writing exercises in a better way."

One student reported that extra work, time and effort was a disadvantage since all of that was needed during Project-Based Tasks. Additionally, another student mentioned that the project was focused on one topic only, which made it impossible to work on other topics. Another student mentioned that someone might not be interested in learning something new and would continue using the same vocabulary and structures. Finally, one student mentioned that there were no disadvantages.

To sum up, it can be concluded that both the information from the teacher's journal and the interviews aimed at analyzing the students' perceptions toward writing after implementing the Project-Based Tasks and reported the same conclusions. Findings show that most students had positive perceptions toward writing after the use of Project-Based Tasks since it was perceived that this approach can improve and enrich writing. Besides, mentioning the three language criteria: message, language, and format, students also stated that they were motivated due to the use of real data that was required from research. Finally, it is important to mention that both the teacher and the students perceived collaborative work as an important element in the process of improving writing.



### 5.3. Quantitative and Qualitative Results Comparison

The third specific objective, which is to compare the quantitative and qualitative results and analyze their relationship, will be addressed in this section. First, the quantitative results will be examined by comparing the students' written production characteristics before and after the intervention. Then these results will be compared with the qualitative data to see their relationship.

Based on the statistical analysis, it can be said that the quantitative results showed a significant increase in the students' written production after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks, where the students exhibited improvement in all three criteria, message, language and format, and subsequently, in their overall score. Thus, the students' written production before the intervention showed the following characteristics: the vocabulary used by the students was sometimes varied, students used basic grammatical structures, there were errors in punctuation or spelling that interfered with communication at some extent, the message was generally conveyed, the format was not appropriate, and there was not a clear structure of the type of text. In a general sense, communication was partially effective.

After the intervention, the students' written production increased significantly, presenting the following characteristics: the vocabulary was varied, more complex grammatical structures were used accurately, there were few errors in punctuation or spelling that did not interfere with communication, the message was conveyed effectively, and the format was appropriate since the type of text contained a clear introduction, main and supporting ideas and a conclusion. In broad terms, communication was effective.

These quantitative results can be cross-referenced with the qualitative results that analyzed the students' perceptions toward writing. The qualitative results from the journal written by the researcher during the intervention as well as from the interviews with students after the





implementation of Project-Based Tasks revealed that students showed positive feelings towards writing after the intervention. It was not only observed by the researcher, but also expressed by the students who said that they had improved their writing skills due to collaborative work where they could receive support from their classmates. They mentioned improvement in format, delivery of the message, and vocabulary, which was also corroborated by the statistical analysis of the quantitative data. In addition, the students expressed an increase in their motivation level when writing since they could use real data in their essays. Finally, it was determined that students felt more confident and comfortable when writing in groups.

To sum up, it can be concluded that the results of the quantitative data in which it was proven that students had increased their writing skills after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks can be supported by the positive perceptions students showed toward writing in which students reported that this approach improved not only their writing skills, but their motivation to write, as well. Additionally, collaborative work was perceived as an aspect that helped students in the writing process. Through the exploration of the quantitative and the qualitative data, the general objective that was to analyze the effects of Project-Based Tasks on written production and perceptions toward writing in students of the second year of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School has been fulfilled.



## Chapter 6

### Discussion

This section discusses the significance of the results obtained from the different data collection instruments used in this research study. It also links the results from both the quantitative and qualitative data in the previous chapter to the results obtained from earlier studies conducted in other contexts discussed in the literature review to analyze the relationship between them as well as between their findings. Finally, it presents some limitations that affected this study.

To gather the quantitative results to answer the first research question of this study, (“How does the implementation of Project-Based Tasks affect written production in International Baccalaureate Diploma Program Students from Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School?”); a pre-test and a post-test were administered to a sample of 9 students at the beginning and at the end of the intervention in order to determine their written production level before and after the application of Project-Based Tasks.

Regarding written production achievement in the present study, the students’ overall score showed that there was significant difference between the results before and after implementing Project-Based Tasks in English ab Initio classes. Keeping in mind that the writing was graded out of 18 points, the mean score went from 7 in the pre-test to 14 in the post test (table 11). In other words, communication went from being partially effective to effective, according the IBDP rubric.

Not only the writing overall score presented improvement, it was also observed in each of the three criteria evaluated, Message, Language, and Format. Message and Language were graded out of 8 points while Format was out of 2. When comparing the mean scores of each

criterion before and after the intervention, results showed that all three criteria exhibited increase in the post-test.

Starting with the message criterion, it was seen that the mean scores went from 3 in the pre-test to 7 in the post-test. This means that before the intervention, the students developed the message in a general way, showing only one or more ideas, with few and simple cohesive devices. But, after the intervention, the message was delivery effectively, where some complex cohesive devices were employed.

The language criterion also exhibited increase in the mean score that went from 4 in the pre-test to 6 in the post-test. Thus, students went from sometimes using varied vocabulary to generally use it. Regarding grammar, students used basic grammatical structures in the pre-test, whereas some more complex grammatical structures were used in the post-test. Errors in punctuation or spelling went from being frequent in the pre-test to occasionally in the post-test. These errors did not interfere with comprehension. Regarding format, the mean scores were 0 in the pre-test and 2 in the post-test. This means that the structure of the essay was not the appropriate one in the pre-test while in the post-test, the students used the appropriate format.

The results from the current study are similar to those of Sholihah (2017), Praba et al (2018), Shanti et al (2018), Sadeghi et al (2016), Thitivesa and Essien (2013) and Salsabila (2018). Starting with the study conducted by Sholihah (2017), it was found that students exhibited improvement in their writing skills after implementing Project-Based Tasks. The author analyzed the students' mean scores that went from 65.3 in the pre-test to 75.50 in the post-test. The criteria evaluated were organization, context, syntax, mechanics, and vocabulary. Thus, the students' writing in the pre-test did not communicate ideas clearly, it did not contain appropriate vocabulary, and it had grammar and punctuation mistakes. But after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks, students were able to express their ideas



clearly in a logical organization; where introduction, body, and conclusion were easily observed. Improvements in grammar and vocabulary were also seen.

As it was mentioned before, this current study is also in line with the study conducted by Praba et al (2018), where it was revealed that there was a significant effect of Project-Based Tasks on students' writing skills. The students' mean scores increased from 68,5 in the pre-test to 81 in the post-test. Besides analyzing the students' overall score, the researchers also focused on the analysis of some criteria to describe the students' writing improvement. The criteria were as follows: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. After the implementation of Project-Based Tasks, students presented development in stating their ideas in a clearer way, their writing was better organized, contained accurate grammatical structures and varied vocabulary, and only few errors in punctuation and spelling were found.

The findings of this current research are also confirmed by Shanti et al (2018), who reported improvement in the students' overall score, whose mean score was 70.45 in the pre-test and 80.31 in the post test. It also exhibited improvement in each criterion when assessing written production. The criteria that were analyzed included content, organization, language use, and mechanics. It was concluded that there was a significant improvement when comparing the mean scores students obtained in each criterion before the intervention with the ones obtained after it. Regarding content, students showed a good level average in the development of their ideas after the intervention. Referring to organization, students reached from a very good average to an excellent average after the implementation of project based-tasks. Vocabulary also revealed increase. Even though the students' writing contained some errors in word form, choice, and usage, these errors did not obscure communication. Furthermore, results in grammar revealed that in spite of using simple constructions, communication was effective. Finally, students demonstrated excellent use of mechanics after using Project-Based Tasks.



The significant positive effect of Project-Based Tasks on EFL students' writing skills was also determined by Sadeghi et al (2016). Their quasi-experimental study revealed that students presented low scores in writing a comparison and contrast paragraph before implementing Project-Based Tasks, but after ten weeks of intervention, the students improved significantly their writing scores. Topic sentence effectiveness, topic development, and contrast and comparison structures were analyzed. Thus, it was concluded that students enhanced their writing skills after being educated by Project-Based Tasks compared to the ones who received instruction based on a textbook.

Thitivesa and Essien (2013) is another author who showed that Project-Based Tasks improved significantly the students' writing skills. He recognized improvement regarding mechanics, usage, and sentence formation. Therefore, after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks, students' writing presented good structure of sentences, where word-order, subject-verb agreement, and verb tense were used correctly. Improvements in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation were also observed. The author stated that specially mechanics and usage exhibited improvement due to the students' exposure to different texts. They gained understanding of the proper use of the two criteria. Finally, it was pointed out that Project-Based Tasks focused on communication, which helped students transmit their message effectively while they applied English writing conventions at the same time.

The similar result was also found in the study carried out by Salsabila (2018), who concluded that Project-Based Tasks improved students' writing skills after analyzing the diagnostic writing and the final draft of a procedural text. The author stated that students were able to have a clear understanding of the concept of a procedural text since its social function, schematic structure, and grammar features were taken into account when writing. Thus, students' writing presented a good structure of the text, where grammar structures and other



linguistic features were used correctly, keeping in mind the social function of it, which was determined by the way the text was presented to the reader.

To gather the qualitative results to answer the second research question of this study, (“What are the IBDP students’ perceptions toward their written production in a Project-Based Task context?”); two instruments, a journal and an interview, were used during the intervention in order to discover their perceptions regarding their written production by applying the Project-Based Tasks.

So, in addition to the students’ written production achievement, their perceptions towards writing were also analyzed in this research study. Results showed that students presented positive perceptions toward writing after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks. Students reported that they had not only improved their writing skills, but also their motivation to writing. They expressed that they felt more confident and comfortable when writing in groups, and perceived collaborative work as an important element in the process of writing.

These findings are in line with the research conducted by Tessema (2005), who concluded that Project-Based Tasks combined with the process approach to writing, motivated students to write. Project-Based Tasks stimulated writing since it was seen as an opportunity for students to write about meaningful topics with an authentic purpose. Besides, other factors that were recognized as motivational were collaboration and interaction with peers, use of all language skills, and different activities that included researching and interviewing. As in the current study, the students mentioned that they felt motivated because they worked with real data in a collaborative way. That was the reason why writing was more valuable and meaningful for them.

Similarly, Farouck (2016), Artini et al (2018), Putri et al (2017), pointed out that Project-Based Tasks had increased students' motivation and self-confidence when writing. Farouck (2016) stated that writing was improved through Project-Based Tasks since students saw this approach as an authentic form of learning, where confidence levels were increased and anxiety was reduced. Artini et al (2018) claimed that students were really engaged in doing the projects and enthusiastic about sharing their ideas during group work, which generated motivation.

Finally, Putri et al (2017) indicated that students enjoyed the learning activities since they participated actively in all the classroom activities during Project-Based Tasks. Furthermore, students expressed interest and willingness to take part in group work which made them engage in the learning activities. The results from these studies are similar to the ones obtained from this current study. Through the teacher's journal, it was observed that students presented a positive response to writing. After some sessions, students started feeling more confident and comfortable with the message, essay structure, grammar, and vocabulary. From the students' interviews, it was concluded that students had positive feelings to writing after the intervention, due to interaction and the exploration of new topics in real contexts.

As it was previously mentioned, an aspect that was stated as positive by many students in this current study was collaborative work since they mentioned that students with better writing skills helped the ones who needed to improve. It was also found that students saw interaction with their classmates during group work as an important aspect for the learning process since they could share experiences, and they improved different skills in real situations.

This is corroborated by Aghayani and Hajmohammadi (2019), Putri et al (2017), Sadeghi et al (2016), Shanti et al (2018), and Ratminingsih (2015) who recognized collaboration and interaction as pivotal in the writing process, which led to motivation toward writing.

Aghayani and Hajmohammadi (2019), for instance, identified collaborative work as an aid to enhance and foster students' writing skills, since interaction and discussion during group work helped students solve their difficulties when writing. Furthermore, Putri et al (2017) recognized collaborative work as essential to improve writing when students supported each other while doing different activities as part of Project-Based Tasks, such as exchanging ideas and information, supporting when writing, evaluating other people's work, and solving problems.

The same findings were discussed by Sadeghi et al (2016), who stated that, according to the students' opinions, interaction among team members and their responsibility regarding as group members were key elements for improving writing and having a positive attitude toward writing. As a final point, the authors highlighted that Project-Based Tasks generated excitement, enthusiasm, and happiness for constructing something new.

Furthermore, Shanti et al (2016) found that students developed their writing skills as well as their positive attitude toward writing due to collaborative work during project-based execution, in which students received lots of support from their partners. Finally, Ratminingsih (2015) stated that students perceived collaborative work and interaction during group work as motivating to write since they participated by sharing their thoughts, which reduced anxiety when writing.

It is important to mention that in the current study, the majority of the students mentioned that they had improved the four language skills while working with Project-Based Tasks, especially due to the interaction while working in groups using English. When asked about what they liked about Project-Based Tasks, they mentioned the opportunity that they had to work collaboratively since they supported each other during the whole process, they gained vocabulary and did research. This finding is in line with the study conducted by Tessema (2005) who stated that even though the final product of the project was written, the other





three skills were improved since it was necessary to interact with their classmates, and they needed English to communicate while they were working collaboratively.

Furthermore, Sapan et al (2019) found that 91% of the students perceived improvement in speaking and writing due to the different activities they had to perform only in English such as discussions, meetings, presentations, which resulted in improving their pronunciation. Besides, the students mentioned that writing had been improved due to their exposure to real material, where they acquired new grammatical structures and varied vocabulary, valuable for their careers. Farouck (2016) is also in line with this present study since he found that students had improved the four skills due to collaborative work as well as other class activities.

As it can be seen in this section, the results obtained from the current research are in line with those previously conducted since they exhibited similarities with the ones gotten in very different contexts.

In this context, it can be said that using Project-Based Tasks to improve writing has a positive effect in an EFL classroom, specifically in an English ab initio class, not only in terms of academic achievement, but also in the students' positive perceptions toward writing, where collaboration and interaction are identified as key elements during this approach.

However, on the other hand, it is important to mention certain problems that have appeared during the development of this study, and they can be considered as limitations that might be taken into account for future research.

- The time used for the intervention was a restraint. Students might have needed more time to adapt themselves to work their written production with the application of Project-Based Tasks, since it was the first time they were involved in this type of learning.



- Even though plenty of studies have been conducted regarding the effects of Project-Based Tasks on EFL students' written production, no studies have been found regarding the effects of Project-Based Tasks on IBDP students' written production. This limitation demonstrates the need for this study to contribute to the literature, and fill out the gap concerning this issue with the purpose of helping educators when teaching EFL in English ab initio classes.
- The number of participants was another limitation. The sample for this study was small since only 9 students were part of this research. It would be interesting to conduct the same study with a large number of students so that the results could be more generalized.
- This study focused on written production only. During interviews, students stated that they have perceived improvement in the four language skills. Even though they mentioned writing in second place, all of them pointed out speaking as the skill that received more improvement. I consider that future studies must focused on the four language skills.
- Lack of peer-feedback instruction was another limitation. It was observed by the teacher and reported by the students that they were not comfortable and confident when giving and receiving feedback from their partners. It would be important to allow some more time for peer-feedback instruction in future studies.

To sum up, in spite of the fact that the present study had some limitations, it is important to mention that it would be useful to include Project-Based Tasks in an EFL classroom, specifically in an English ab initio class to help students improve their written production as well as their motivation to writing.



## Chapter 7

### Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter focuses on presenting the conclusions and recommendations for further research about the use of Project-Based Tasks on written production in an English ab Initio class based on the results, findings, and limitations of the current study.

Writing is one of the language skills assessed at the end of the second year of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. This assessment focuses on the students' ability to write different text types that reflect an effective communication. For that reason, it was imperative to select an approach that could help IBDP students improve their writing skills, since it was very difficult for them to write and feel motivated at the same time.

It is worth mentioning that according to the literature, writing has been seen by many EFL students as the most difficult language skill to acquire due to the fact that they have to deal with different elements to be able to communicate effectively. At the same time, it has been stated that since students have to deal with different elements, they start feeling demotivated and anxious. In addition, it is essential to remark that the literature has suggested Project-Based Tasks as an approach to improve students' writing as well as their motivation to it.

In this context, the current study was conducted with the purpose of analyzing the effects of Project-Based Tasks on written production and perceptions toward writing of students of the second year of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School. This research project also had three specific objectives that were to determine the IBDP students' written production level before and after the application of Project-Based Tasks through an IBDP test, to explore the students' perceptions toward writing after the use of Project-Based Tasks in their English classes, and to compare the quantitative and the qualitative results and analyze their relationship.



In order to address the first specific objective, quantitative data were gathered through the pre-test and the post-test administration. Thus, the students' overall scores were analyzed as well as each criterion, message, language, and format. The paired-sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was used to compare the pre-test and the post-test to determine if there was a difference before and after the intervention by comparing the two medians of the population. Therefore, it was found that there was a significant difference in the overall score median as well as in the medians of the scores obtained in the three criteria analyzed. Consequently, the written production represented a considerable improvement after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks ( $sig < 0,05$ ).

Based on the statistical analysis that was done in the present study, the students' writing did not contain varied vocabulary before the intervention. It had basic grammatical structures with errors in punctuation and spelling that sometimes obscured communication, the message was generally transmitted, and the format was not the appropriate one. In general, communication was partially effective.

But, after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks in English ab Initio classes, it was revealed that the students' writing increased significantly since it presented the following characteristics: it contained more varied vocabulary and more complex grammatical structures, it had only a few errors in punctuation or spelling that did not obscure communication, and the format was the appropriate one as it had a clear introduction, main and supporting ideas, and a conclusion. In other words, communication was effective.

This leads to the conclusion that project-based tasks have undoubtedly brought positive effects on IBDP students' written production. It was proven statistically that students had significantly improved their writing skills when comparing the pre-test and the post-test results. It was also observed improvement in all three criteria analyzed (message, language,



and format). Thus, students were able to convey a message in an effective way, the structure of the essay was the appropriate one, and there was improvement in grammar and vocabulary. In other words, there was an effective communication after implementing Project-Based Tasks in English ab Initio classes.

Regarding the second specific objective, qualitative data gathered from a teacher's journal and interviews conducted with students were used to explore the students' perceptions toward writing after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks. From the teacher's journal, it was found that even though at the beginning the students were reluctant to participate, later they were engaged in the learning activities. In fact, they looked more confident and comfortable to exchange their ideas and participate in discussions. Plenty of collaborative work was seen since they supported each other during the whole phase of intervention, especially when they needed vocabulary and some help with grammar structures. Finally, it was observed that students looked more confident when writing down their ideas, structuring their essays, and using more complex grammar structures and new words. In general, a positive reaction toward writing was observed. The only problem students presented and expressed was related to peer-feedback. Even though students supported each other during the writing process, they were not open to give written feedback, maybe due to the lack of correct instruction and practice.

From the interviews, it was found that 78 % of students preferred working with projects than working with textbooks. Besides, all students stated that they felt optimistic and/or good during Project-Based Tasks because they perceived this approach as innovative, where they could interact and exchange ideas with their team members in real situations. Nobody showed negative feelings toward this approach. Furthermore, collaborative work was mentioned as something they liked about working with Project-Based Tasks since they received support and help from their classmates, and they gained vocabulary.



Regarding the language skills in which they perceived development, the majority of the students indicated that they had improved the four language skills due to interaction and collaboration during group work. Speaking was the first language skill that was mentioned, followed by writing in second place, then reading and listening were mentioned. Regarding Project-Based Tasks and writing, students identified improvement in format, in message delivery, and in grammar and vocabulary. The use of real data and collaborative work were also mentioned as advantages of using Project-Based Tasks to improve their writing skills.

In order to analyze the third specific objective, to compare the quantitative and the qualitative results and analyze their relationship, the results from the pre-test and the post-test were cross-referenced with the results from the teacher's journal and the interviews.

Starting with the results from the qualitative data, it is imperative to mention that it was observed by the teacher and expressed by the students that they had positive feelings toward writing after the intervention due to the use of real data and collaborative work. Additionally, it was concluded that students improved their writing skills regarding to format, message delivery, and grammar and vocabulary. At this point, it is crucial to mention that this improvement in writing was corroborated by the statistical analysis of the quantitative data. Overall, by doing this analysis, the results of the quantitative data, which proved that there was a statistically significant difference of the writing skills before and after implementing Project-Based Tasks, is supported by the qualitative results that showed positive perceptions toward writing, in which students expressed improvement not only in their writing skills, but also in their attitude and motivation to it. In this way, the general objective that was to analyze the effects of Project-Based Tasks on written production and perceptions toward writing in students of the second year of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón School was addressed.



To sum up, regarding students' perceptions toward writing after the implementation of Project-Based Tasks, it is concluded that students presented a positive reaction to writing. Students perceived that they had improved their writing skills since they were able to use the appropriate format when writing an essay. Besides, they reported improvement in grammar and vocabulary accuracy, and in message delivery. Collaborative work was a key element in the students' writing progress since they helped and supported each other during Project-Based Tasks. Besides, as a result of the collaborative work, students felt more comfortable, confident, and motivated when writing.

All of these outcomes lead to the final conclusion that Project-Based Tasks had a positive effect on students' written production as well as on their perceptions toward writing. It is concluded that Project-Based Tasks might be effective in order to develop the three writing criteria analyzed: message, language, and format. Besides, through the use of Project-Based Tasks, students could have positive perceptions toward writing, making them feel more motivated, comfortable and confident when writing.

Finally, it is important to mention some recommendations for possible future research studies in order to use of Project-Based Tasks to enhance written production in EFL classrooms.

First of all, the literature review in this study shows that there is a lack of research about the effects of Project-Based Tasks on IBDP students' writing skills. Therefore, the main recommendation for educators would be to dedicate time to examine how this approach could impact writing or any other language skill in other English ab Initio classes.

A second recommendation would be to instruct students on how to give appropriate feedback. In the current study, students did not feel confident when they had to give feedback to their classmates because they considered they were not well-prepared for it.



A third recommendation would be to conduct a similar study with a larger sample size, and in that way the effect could be demonstrated more clearly and the results might be generalizable.

Finally, it would be interesting to analyze the effect of Project-Based Tasks on the four language skills, since during interviews, most students reported improvement not only in writing, but also in the other language skills. It is also essential to mention that speaking was mentioned as the skill that had been improved the most, followed by writing in second place. Therefore, future studies can be conducted on the effects of Project-Based Tasks on speaking only, or on the four language skills.

In summary, despite the fact that there are limitations in this study, we can further our knowledge about how the use of Project-Based Tasks can impact EFL classrooms. It is expected that Project-Based Tasks continue developing along with other new trends in teaching English as a Foreign Language with the purpose of improving our teaching practice.





## References

- Aghayani, B. & Hajmohammadi, E., (2019). Project-based learning: Promoting EFL learners' writing skills. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 22(1), 78-85. doi:10.24071/llt.2019.220108
- Ahangari, S. & Behzady, L. (2012). The effect of explicit teaching of concept maps on Iranian EFL learners writing performance. *American Journal of Scientific Research*, 6(1), 100-112. doi:10.17507/jltr.0601.24
- Alan, B. & Stoller, F. L. (2005). Maximizing the benefits of project work in foreign language classrooms. *English Teaching Forum*, 43(4), 10-21.
- Artini, L., Ratminingsih, N., & Padmadewi, N. (2018). Project based learning in EFL classes: Material development and impact of implementation. *Dutch Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 4(2), 67-79. doi:10.1075/dujal.17014.art
- Asmara, R. (2015). Question and answer controller composition: a technique for developing students' writing skill. *Premise Journal*, 4(1), 1-11.
- Aupperlee, J., Geraghty, N., & Lien, M. (n.d.). *Written expression*. Retrieved from <https://msu.edu/course/cep/886/Writing/page1.htm>
- Barnett, E., Tokuhama, T., Rivera, M., Aguirre, L. M., Puente, T., & Bryner, K. (2013). *Research on the Implementation of the Diploma Programme in Ecuador's State Schools*. New York, United States: Columbia University.
- Berlanga, V., & Rubio, M.J. (2012). Clasificación de pruebas no paramétricas. Cómo aplicarlas en SPSS. *Reire*, 5(2), 101-113. doi:10.1344/reire2012.5.2528
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Oaks, United States: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Los Angeles, United States: Sage.



- Díaz, M. (2014). The impact of project work and the writing process method on writing production. *HOW, A Colombian Journal for Teachers of English*, 21(2), 31-52.  
doi:10.19183/how.21.2.3
- Du, X. M. & Han, J. (2016). A literature review on the definitions and process of project-based learning and other relative studies. *Creative Education*, 7(2), 1079-1083.  
doi:10.4236/ce.2016.77112
- Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador. (2016). *EFL Curriculum*. Quito, Ecuador: Ministerio de Educación. Retrieved from <https://educacion.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2016/03/EFL1.pdf>
- Farouck, I. (2016). A project-based language learning model for improving the willingness to communicate of EFL students. *Systematics, Cybernetics and Informatics*, 14(2), 11-17.
- Fragoulis, L. (2009). *Project-Based Learning in the Teaching of English as A Foreign Language in Greek Primary Schools: From Theory to Practice*. Retrieved from <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/elt/article/view/2739/3286>
- Gass, S. M., & Mackey, A. (2012). *Research methods in second language acquisition: A practical guide*. Chichester, England: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Gorgas, J., Cardiel, N., & Zamorano, J. (2011). *Estadísticas básicas para las ciencias*. Madrid, España: Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
- Greeno, J. G. (2006). Learning in activity. In R. K. Sawyer (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of the learning sciences* (pp.79-96) New York, United States: Cambridge University Press.
- Harklau, L. (2002). The role of writing in classroom language acquisition. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 11(4), 329-350. doi:10.1016/S1060-3743(02)00091-7



- Hasan, M. & Akhand M., (2011). Approaches to writing in EFL/ESL context: Balancing product and process in writing class at tertiary level. *Journal or NELTA*, 15(1-2), 77-88. doi:10.3126/nelta.v15i1-2.4612
- Hedge, T. (1993). Key concepts in ELT. *ELT Journal*, 47(3), 275-277.  
doi:10.1993/esj/47.3.275
- Helle, L., Tynjala, P., & Olkinuora, E. (2006). Project-based learning in post-secondary education—theory, practice and rubber sling shots. *Higher Education*, 51(2), 287-314.  
doi:10.1007/s10734-004-6386-5
- International Baccalaureate Organization (2013). *Diploma Programme Language ab Initio guide*. Retrieved from <https://www.ibo.org>
- International Baccalaureate Organization. (2011). *Diploma Programme Language ab Initio guide*. Geneva, Switzerland: Peterson House.
- International Baccalaureate Organization. (2018). *Diploma Programme Language ab initio guide*. Geneva, Switzerland: Peterson House.
- Jensen, J., Flood J., & Squire J. P. (1991). *Handbook of research on teaching the English language*. New York, United States: Macmillan
- Jumaat, N., Tasir, Z., Abd, N., Mohamad A., & Zakiah M.A. (2017). Project based learning from constructivism point of view. *Advanced Science Letters*, 23(8), 7904-7906.  
doi:10.1166/asl.2017.9605
- Katz, L. G. & Chard, C. (2000). *Engaging children's minds: The project approach*. Connecticut, United States: Ablex Publishing.
- Kemmis, S. (2009). Action research as a practice-based practice. *Educational Action Research*, 17(68), 54-60. doi:10.1080/09650790903093284
- Kothari, C.R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*. New Delhi, India: New Age International Publishers.



- Markham, T. (2011). Project based learning. *Teacher Librarian*, 39(2), 38-42.
- Marx, R. W., Blumenfeld, P. C., Krajcik, J. S., & Soloway, E. (1997). Enacting project-based science: Challenges for practice and policy. *Elementary School Journal*, 97(4), 341-358. doi:10.1086/461870
- Moscoso C. I., & Calle, D. (2011). Evaluación del impacto socioeconómico del microcrédito en la zona oriental de la provincia del Azuay. *Retos*, 1(1), 11-18. doi:10.17163/ret.nl.2011.01
- Mourssi, A. (2013). Theoretical and practical linguistic shifting from product/guided writing to process writing and recently to the innovated writing process approach in teaching writing for second/foreign language learners. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 3(5), 731-751.
- MyPBLworks. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://my.pblworks.org/planner>
- Onozawa, C. (2010). A study of the process writing approach: A suggestion for an eclectic writing approach. *Journal of Kyoai Gakuen Maebashi International University*, 10(1), 153-163.
- Palpanadan, S., Ismail, F., & Salam, H. (2015). Evaluating product writing approach in the context of Malaysian classrooms: A conceptual paper. *LSP International Journal*, 2(2), 1-6. doi:10.11113/lspi.v2n2.23
- Praba, L., Artini, L., & Ramendra, D. (2018). Project-based learning and writing skill in EFL: are they related? *Global Conference on Teaching Assessment, and Learning in Education*, 42(59), 1-6. doi:10.1051/shsconf/20184200059
- Putri, N. L., Artini L. P., & Nitiasih P. K. (2017). Project based learning activities and EFL students' productive skills in English. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 8(6), 1147-1155. doi:10.17507/jltr.0806.16



- Rashtchi, M., & Ghandi, M. (2011). Writing revision strategies: Do they enhance writing ability? *Man and the Word*, 13(3), 67-80.
- Ratminingsih, N. M. (2015). The use of personal photographs in writing in project-based language learning: A case study. *The New English Teacher*, 9(1), 102-118.
- Sadeghi, H, Biniarz M., & Soleimani, H. (2016). The impact of project-based language learning on Iranian EFL learners comparison/contrast paragraph writing skills. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 6, 510-524.  
doi:10.18488/journal.1/2016.6.9/1.9.510.524
- Salsabila, V. (2018). The implementation of project-based learning in teaching Writing of procedural text. *Journal of English Pedagogy, Linguistics, Literature, and Language Teaching (JEOPALLT)*, 6(1), 1-16. doi:10.35194/jj.v6i1.384
- Sapan, N., Katijah, S., Zulhaimi, N., Abdul, H., & Ramli, S. (2019). Project-based learning and its effect on students' English skills. *International Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, 1(2), 73-85.
- Shanti, V. M., Syahrial S., & Koto I. (2016). Project based learning approach to improve students' ability to write descriptive text. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literature*, 2(2), 46-54. doi:10.33369/joall.v1i2.4196
- Sholihah, U. (2017). Project-based learning (PJBL) to improve students' writing capability. *Science, Engineering, Education, and Development Studies (SEEDS)*, 1(1), 57-72.  
doi:10.20961/seeds.v1i1.20278
- Stoller, F. (2006). Establishing a theoretical foundation for project based learning in the second and foreign language contexts. In G. Beckett & P. Miller (Eds.), *Project-based second and foreign language education* (pp.19-40) Greenwich, England: Information Age Publishing.



- Sun, C., & Feng, G. (2009). Process approach to teaching writing applied in different teaching models. *English Language Teaching*, 2(1), 150-155. doi:10.5539/elt.v2n1p150.
- Susser, B. (1994). Process approaches in ESL/EFL writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 3(1), 31-47. doi:10.1016/1060-3743(94)90004-3
- Tessema, K. (2005). Stimulating writing through project-based tasks. *English Teaching Forum*, 43(4), 22-28.
- Thitivesa, D. & Essien, A. M. (2013). The use of project to enhance writing skill. *World Academy of Science*, 4(2), 1-5.
- Thomas, J. W. (2000). A review of research on project-based learning. Proceedings of Research on PBL Conference, Indianapolis, United States.
- Thuan, P. D. (2018). Project-based learning: From theory to EFL classroom practice. Proceedings of the 6th International Open TESOL Conference, Vietnam.
- Ulrich, C. (2016). John Dewey and the project-based learning: Landmarks for nowadays Romanian education. *Journal of Educational Sciences & Psychology*, 6(68), 54-60.
- Woolson, R. F. (2008). *Wilcoxon signed-rank test, in encyclopedia of clinical trials*. Charleston, United States: John Wiley & Sons.
- Zemach, D. E. & Stafford-Yilmaz, L., (2008). *Writers at work.: The essay*. New York, United States: Cambridge University Press.



## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Parents' and Students' Informed Consent Form

#### FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO DE PARTICIPACIÓN EN EL PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

El propósito de este formulario de consentimiento es proveer a los participantes y a sus representantes de una explicación de la naturaleza de la investigación, así como su rol en ella como participantes.

**Investigador:** Lcda. Karina Segarra      **Teléfono:** 0998652723      **Email:** kasm\_10@yahoo.com

**Nombre del Proyecto:** “Influencia de la implementación de Tareas Basadas en Proyectos en la producción escrita de los estudiantes del Programa Diploma del Bachillerato Internacional”

Soy estudiante de la Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la enseñanza del inglés como Lengua Extranjera, la misma que se está desarrollando en la Universidad de Cuenca. Estoy llevando a cabo un estudio sobre *La Influencia de la implementación de Tareas Basadas en Proyectos en la producción escrita de los estudiantes del Programa Diploma del Bachillerato Internacional*, como requisito previo a la obtención de mi título de maestría.

El objetivo de estudio es saber cómo influyen las Tareas Basadas en Proyectos para el mejoramiento de la destreza de la escritura en los estudiantes del Programa Diploma del Bachillerato Internacional de la Unidad Educativa del Milenio Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón.

El estudio consiste de la implementación de tareas basadas en proyectos y una entrevista al estudiante. Además, el alumno tendrá que asistir de forma normal a sus clases regulares de inglés. Es importante indicar que la participación o no participación en el estudio no afectará la nota del estudiante y toda información recopilada será de estricta confidencialidad.

La participación es voluntaria. El estudio no conlleva riesgos de ninguna naturaleza, pero tampoco implica beneficios económicos o similares. Usted y su representado tienen el derecho de retirar el consentimiento para la participación en cualquier momento.

De este modo, la información obtenida será utilizada solo para fines investigativos. Eso significa que la información será llevada de forma anónima y cuando los resultados sean publicados se los hará de manera general sin mencionar nombres en particular.

#### Investigador

Yo, Tania Karina Segarra Matute, he explicado a los estudiantes las actividades que se van a realizar durante la investigación y he contestado todas las preguntas de los futuros participantes.

Firma: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Participante

He leído la información proporcionada en este formulario de permiso, siendo todas mis preguntas contestadas. Por tanto estoy de acuerdo con participar con este proyecto de investigación.



Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

**Representante Legal**

Yo, \_\_\_\_\_ con cedula N° \_\_\_\_\_  
representante legal del estudiante \_\_\_\_\_ estoy de acuerdo que mi  
representado participe en este proyecto de investigación.

Firma: \_\_\_\_\_

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_





## Appendix B

### Request for Authorization for the Application of the Research



Certifico:  
*hem - SPAI*  
Secretaría del Colegio

Cuenca, 8 de enero de 2019

Magister  
Sonia Cazorla,  
RECTORA DE LA UNIDAD EDUCATIVA DEL MILENIO  
MANUELA GARAICOA DE CALDERÓN,  
Su despacho

Luego de saludarle, me dirijo a Usted con el objeto de solicitarle de la manera más comedida me conceda el permiso para trabajar con los estudiantes del Segundo Año del Bachillerato Internacional, Tercero "H" que corresponde al año lectivo 2018-2019, en el proyecto de investigación titulado "The Effects of Project-Based Tasks on International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Students' Writing Skills," que llevaré a cabo como estudiante de la Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la enseñanza del inglés como Lengua Extranjera, la misma que se está desarrollando en la Universidad de Cuenca.

El estudio que elaboraré previo a la obtención del título de master, se titula *La Influencia de la implementación de Tareas Basadas en Proyectos en la producción escrita de los estudiantes del Programa Diploma del Bachillerato Internacional.*

El objetivo de estudio es saber cómo influyen las Tareas Basadas en Proyectos para el mejoramiento de la destreza de la escritura en los estudiantes del Programa Diploma del Bachillerato Internacional de la Unidad Educativa del Milenio Manuela Garaicoa de Calderón.

Por la favorable acogida que se sirva dar a la presente, anticipo mis agradecimientos.

Atentamente, ...

*Karina Segarra*  
Lcda. Karina Segarra

POST-GRADISTA Y DOCENTE TITULAR DE LA UEM MANUELA  
GARAICOA DE CALDERÓN

C.I. 0103823688

Aprobado

*Rosa Torres*  
MGTR. ROSA TORRES  
DIRECTORA DE TESIS

Aprobado

*Gabriela Tobar*  
MGTR. GABRIELA TOBAR  
COORDINADORA DE LA MLAEILE



## Appendix C

### School Consent Form



UNIDAD EDUCATIVA DEL MILENIO  
**MANUELA GARAICOA DE CALDERÓN**  
DEPARTAMENTO DE INSPECCION GENERAL  
Año Lectivo 2018-2019

Cuenca. 11 de enero de 2019

Oficio 057 VIC-MAT.

Lcda.  
Karina Segarra  
DOCENTE DE INGLES

De mis consideraciones

Luego de expresarle un cordial saludo me permito indicar que su solicitud ha sido aceptada, para que trabaje con los estudiantes de Tercero H, en el Proyecto de investigación La influencia de la implementación de Tareas basadas en proyectos en la producción escrita de los estudiantes del Programa Diploma de Bachillerato Internacional.

Expresando el sentimiento de consideración y estima

Atentamente,

Ing. Sonia Nauta Lozada  
VICERRECTORA ( E)





## Appendix D

### Project Planner

# PROJECT PLANNER

## 1. Project Overview

<b>Project Title</b>	Best job options for high school students during vacations	<b>Public Product(s) (Individual and Team)</b>	An argumentative essay
<b>Driving Question</b>	What jobs are the best options for high school students on vacation?		
<b>Grade Level/ Subject</b>	2 <sup>ND</sup> year of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme /English ab Initio		
<b>Time Frame</b>	32 hours (May-June)		
<b>Project Summary</b>	Students will work together to carry out an investigation in order to know what are the best job opportunities for high school students during vacation. After their investigation, the results will be used to write an argumentative essay about the jobs students can do on vacation time.		



## 2. Learning Goals

Standards	Conduct research to answer the driving question.	Literacy Skills	Writing an argumentative essay
	Write arguments containing clear reasons and important evidence.		Reading and identifying arguments, counterarguments, types of hooks, concluding sentences, types of supporting ideas, etc.
	Write the essay using appropriate language, register, and format.		Presenting arguments with evidence
	Produce coherent writing that contains vocabulary that is appropriate to the topic, purpose of the task, and audience.		Engaging in collaborative work
			Participating in discussions using English
		Success Skills	Developing research skills, conceptual understanding, and critical and creative thinking skills.
			Being good communicators, cooperative, and respectful of other person's points of view.
			Being open-minded, caring, risk takers, balanced and reflective.
Key Vocabulary	Argumentative language	Rubric(s)	<a href="#">IBDP assessment criteria</a>
	Conversational gambits		
	Academic language		



### 3. CALENDAR

Milestone #1 Step 1	Milestone #2 Step 2	Milestone #3 Step 3	Milestone #4 Step 4	Milestone #5 Step 5
<p><i>Students and instructor agree on a theme for the project.</i></p> <p>See-Think-Wonder chart</p> <p>come up with a driving question</p> <p>the topic for the project</p> <p>(1 period)</p>	<p><i>Students and instructor determine the final outcome</i></p> <p>Give a name to their project.</p> <p>Set the objectives for the project.</p> <p>(2 periods)</p>	<p><i>Students and instructor structure the project.</i></p> <p>Some questions to guide the structure of the project are given.</p> <p>Students elaborate a timeline.</p> <p>Students establish the roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>(5 periods)</p>	<p><i>Instructor prepares students for the demands of information gathering.</i></p> <p>Students select the instrument to be used and they elaborate it.</p> <p>Students receive language instruction.</p> <p>(5 periods)</p>	<p><i>Students gather information.</i></p> <p>Students use the instrument they selected to collect data.</p>
Milestone #6 Step 6	Milestone #7 Step 7	Milestone #8 Step 8	Milestone #9 Step 9	Milestone #10 Step 10



<p><i>Instructor prepares students to compile and analyze data.</i></p> <p>Students receive instruction on how they could analyze data.</p> <p>Students receive language instruction to participate in discussions.</p> <p>(2 periods)</p>	<p><i>Students compile and analyze information.</i></p> <p>Students work in group to organize and analyze relevant information.</p> <p>The teacher monitors the activity.</p> <p>(6 periods)</p>	<p><i>Instructor prepares students for the language demands of the final activity.</i></p> <p>Students receive instruction on how to write argumentative essays through the process approach to writing: it encompasses <i>idea generation, freewriting, drafting, editing, and final draft</i> production.</p> <p>There are brainstorming activities, writing tasks, editing, and the writing of the final product. Individual, pair and group work is needed. besides, peer feedback is given and received.</p> <p>(9 periods)</p>	<p><i>Students present the final product.</i></p> <p>The audience of the final product are the students of the first year of the IBDP. Therefore, their argumentative essays were posted on the bulletin board in this class.</p> <p>(1 period)</p>	<p><i>Students evaluate the project.</i></p> <p>A power point presentation describing how they developed the project. Project reflection and evaluation.</p> <p>(1 period)</p>
--	--	--	---	--

Adapted from <https://my.pblworks.org/planner>



## Appendix E

### PBL Lesson Plans

PBL LESSON PLAN 1		
Course:	3rd H International Baccalaureate	
Subject:	English ab Initio	
Unit tittle:	Employment	
Lesson Tittle	Project introduction	Lesson Duration: 1 class
Driving question	What jobs are the best options for high school students on vacation?	
Project Description: Students will investigate what jobs are available for students to do during vacation time and they will write an argumentative essay about it		
Stage in project work: Speculation		Project step: 1 <i>Students and instructor agree on a theme for the project</i>

<b>Learning outcomes:</b>
To arouse the students' interest on the topic.
To establish the driving question
To have an understanding of what the project is about.

<b>Basic Competency</b>
Make observations and interpreting a situation as an introduction of the topic.

<b>Learning materials (key vocabulary)</b>
Work and employment vocabulary

<b>Instructional activities:</b>
Introduction/presentation of the topic: students will see a picture of a teenager who seems very worried after looking at her empty piggy box and they will work in groups with the I SEE/ THINK/WONDER chart so that they make careful observations and develop their own ideas and interpretations based on what they see. By asking the questions, What do you see? And What do you think about what you see?, they students can distinguish between observations and interpretations,



by encouraging students to wonder and ask questions, their curiosity is stimulated and the students are helped to reach for new connections.

Then I will structure the groups so that they start planning a project in order to answer the driving question: What jobs are the best options for high school students on vacation? I will

As a whole class, we will talk about the rules for the project.

#### Assessment

A small talk with the whole class about the topic to be studied and the rules for the project

**Karina Segarra**

PBL LESSON PLAN 2		
Course:	3rd H International Baccalaureate	
Subject:	English ab Initio	
Unit tittle:	Employment	
Lesson Tittle	Determining the final outcome	Lesson Duration: 2 classes
Driving question	What jobs are the best options for high school students on vacation?	
Project Description: Students will investigate what jobs are available for students to do during vacation time and they will write an argumentative essay about it		
Stage in project work: Speculation		Project step: 2 Students and instructor determine the final outcome.

#### Learning outcomes:

By the end of the lesson, the students and the teacher will determine the final outcome of the project: an argumentative essay

Besides, the objectives and the audience of the final outcome will be established.

#### Basic Competency

Set objectives for the project

Select the audience of the final outcome

#### Learning materials (key vocabulary)

Using infinitives to set objectives.





<b>Instructional activities:</b>
Once the final outcome of the project is determined, the students will write the objectives for their project in groups. Then the audience of the final outcome will be selected as a whole class.

<b>Assessment</b>
Checking the objectives written by the students.

**Karina Segarra**

#### **TEACHER**

Adapted from <https://my.pblworks.org/planner> and Artini, Ratminingsih, and Padmadewi (2018).



## Appendix F

### Peer Feedback Form

#### B Benefit from peer feedback

Exchange essays and books with a partner. Fill out the form below about your partner's essay. Then return the book and discuss your answers.

#### PEER FEEDBACK FORM

Writer's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 On your partner's paper, underline the thesis statement twice.
- 2 Answer these questions about the thesis statement. Mark each ☒ or ☐ X.  
☐ Is the thesis statement in the introduction?  
☐ Does the thesis statement contain a course of action, implied or stated?
- 3 Underline the topic sentence of each body paragraph once.
- 4 What types of support are used in each body paragraph?  
Body paragraph 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
Body paragraph 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Body paragraph 3: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Which are the writer's strongest and weakest arguments?  
Strongest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Weakest: \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Can you think of any other persuasive arguments to support the writer's position?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Does the writer consider and address counterarguments for each argument? If not, what other counterarguments do you think the writer should consider?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Answer these questions about the conclusion. Mark each ☒ or ☐ X.  
☐ Does the conclusion summarize the main points of the essay?  
☐ Does the conclusion end with a strong concluding statement?
- 9 Draw a star (★) in the margin next to your favorite sentences. Choose two or three. Put a question mark (?) next to any sentences that you didn't understand.
- 10 Any other comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Zemach, D. E. & Stafford-Yilmaz, L., (2008). *Writers at work.: The essay*. New York:

Cambridge University Press.



## Appendix G

### Pre-test and Post-test

#### Paper 2: Productive Skills

##### Section B

Student: .....

The development of technology has brought the premise that human labor is no longer indispensable in certain tasks in the workplace, which might be beneficial; however, some people are worried that technological advances will lead to unemployment problems. Write an argumentative essay explaining if it is good or bad for our society that the jobs that were previously held by real people can be done now by artificial intelligences (robots, learning machines). Support your arguments with specific reasons and examples. Write at least 100 words. Do not write more than 200 words (40minutes).

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Adapted from International Baccalaureate Organization (2013).



## Appendix H

### IBDP External Assessment Criteria for Productive Skills-Section B

#### Paper 2: Productive skills—Section B Rubric

	7-8	5-6	3-4	1-2	0
<b>LANGUAGE</b> <p>To what extent does the student demonstrate an ability to use the language effectively and accurately?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the student use a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures?</li> <li>• Does the student show an awareness of the appropriate register for the task?</li> </ul>	<p><b>The response is accurate and communication is effective.</b></p> <p>The range of vocabulary used is varied and effective.</p> <p>Basic and some more complex grammatical structures are used accurately.</p> <p>Register is appropriate.</p> <p>Few (if any) noticeable lapses in punctuation or spelling.</p>	<p><b>The response is generally accurate and communication is generally effective.</b></p> <p>The range of vocabulary used is varied.</p> <p>Basic grammatical structures and a limited range of more complex grammatical structures are used accurately.</p> <p>Register is generally appropriate.</p> <p>Occasional lapses in punctuation or spelling which do not interfere with comprehension.</p>	<p><b>The response and communication are partially effective.</b></p> <p>The range of vocabulary used is sometimes varied.</p> <p>Most basic grammatical structures are used accurately.</p> <p>Register is partially appropriate.</p> <p>Errors in punctuation or spelling fairly frequent; occasional re-reading necessary for full comprehension.</p>	<p><b>The response and communication are of limited effectiveness.</b></p> <p>The range of vocabulary used is limited.</p> <p>Some basic grammatical structures are used accurately. These are isolated and limited in range.</p> <p>Register is inappropriate.</p> <p>Frequent errors in spelling or punctuation lead sometimes to obscurity.</p>	<p><b>The response does not reach a standard described by the descriptors</b></p> <p>Errors in spelling or punctuation so frequent that reader must often rely on own interpretation.</p>

	<b>7-8</b>	<b>5-6</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>MESSAGE</b> To what extent does the student fulfill the task? • Are the ideas well developed? • Is there evidence of a logical structure (paragraphing and sequencing)? • Are cohesive devices used effectively?	<b>The task has been fulfilled effectively.</b> All ideas have been developed well. There is an effective, logical structure. There is successful use of a range of simple and some complex cohesive devices.	<b>The task has been fulfilled.</b> All ideas have been identified and some have been developed well. There is a logical structure. There is successful use of a range of simple cohesive devices.	<b>The task has been generally fulfilled.</b> One or more ideas have been identified and have been developed. There is evidence of a logical structure. There is a generally successful use of a range of simple cohesive devices.	<b>The task has been partially fulfilled.</b> One or more ideas have been identified and have been partially developed. There is limited evidence of a logical structure. There is a partially successful use of a limited range of simple cohesive devices.	The response does not reach a standard described by the descriptors.
	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>FORMAT</b> To what extent does the student succeed in using the correct text type?	The format is appropriate. - It contains an introduction that states the main topic and position. It previews	The format is partially appropriate. The introduction states the main topic or position. It previews the structure of	The format is not appropriate. There is no clear introduction of the main topic, position or structure of the paper.		



<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the student use the appropriate format?</li></ul>	<p>the structure of the paper.</p> <p>It contains a main idea and it is supported by detailed information.</p> <p>The conclusion presents at least two the following indicators: 1. It restates the main premise. 2. It summarizes the arguments which support the main premise. 3. It provides a general statement of how people will benefit from the premise.</p>	<p>the topic at some extent.</p> <p>It contains a main idea which is not strongly supported by detailed information.</p> <p>The conclusion presents at least one the following indicators: 1. It restates the main premise. 2. It summarizes the arguments which support the main premise. 3. It provides a general statement of how people will benefit from the premise.</p>	<p>The main idea is not clear. Supporting details and information are typically unclear and not related to the topic.</p> <p>There is no clear conclusion.</p>		
--	--	--	--	--	--

Adapted from the International Baccalaureate Organization. (2011). *Diploma Programme*

*Language ab Initio guide*. Geneva, Switzerland: Peterson House.

## Appendix I

## Teacher's Journal Template

General information:

Number of participants: .....

Class: .....

Observation date: .....

Stage of the project: .....

Step: ..... Class number.....

Observation	Interpretation
<b>KEY WORDS:</b>	
<b>REFLECTION</b>	

Adapted from Kemmis, S. (2009). Action research as a practice-based practice. *Educational Action Research*, 17(68), 54-60. doi: 10.1080/09650790903093284



## **Appendix J**

### **Interview Guide Template**

#### **Entrevista**

Entrevista sobre las percepciones de los estudiantes hacia la escritura después de la implementación de tareas basadas en proyectos.

Fecha: ..... Hora: .....

Lugar: .....

Entrevistado: .....

Entrevistador: .....

La siguiente entrevista se lleva a cabo con el propósito de identificar las percepciones de los estudiantes hacia la destreza de la escritura después de la implementación de Tareas Basadas en Proyectos. El principio de ética será parte de esta investigación, ya que la información recolectada se manejará confidencialmente.

#### **Guía de preguntas**

1. Hay personas que prefieren aprender inglés, siguiendo el contenido de un texto; mientras que otras personas prefieren aprenderlo a través de la realización de proyectos. ¿Usted cuál de las dos opciones prefiere? Explique su respuesta.
2. ¿Cómo se sintió al trabajar en la asignatura de inglés con actividades basadas en proyectos? (optimista, pesimista, bien, mal, ¿por qué?)
3. ¿Qué le gustó acerca de trabajar con tareas basadas en proyectos? ¿Por qué?
4. ¿Qué le disgustó acerca de trabajar con tareas basadas en proyectos? ¿Por qué?





5. ¿Qué obstáculos usted enfrentó durante las tareas basadas en proyectos? ¿Cómo los resolvió?
6. Teniendo en cuenta que las destrezas del inglés son escuchar, hablar, leer y escribir, ¿considera usted que trabajar con actividades basadas en proyectos mejoró alguna o algunas de estas destrezas? Explique su respuesta.
7. Según su experiencia, ¿cuáles son las ventajas de usar tareas basadas en proyectos para mejorar la destreza de escritura en los estudiantes?
8. Según su experiencia, ¿cuáles son las desventajas de usar tareas basadas en proyectos mejorar la destreza de escritura en los estudiantes?

Adapted from Artini, L., Ratminingsih, N., & Padmadewi, N. (2018). Project based learning in EFL classes: Material development and impact of implementation. *Dutch Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 4(2), 67-79. doi:10.1075/dujal.17014.art